





MOSCOW ADMITS A CRITIC

There is no doubt, as far as Moscow is concerned, that a definite stage of achievement and prosperity has been reached.

It is thus that Sir Bernard Pares speaks of the Five Year Plan and its workings as he saw them on a recent visit to Moscow. No one interested in Russia can fail to perceive the immense significance of his remark. Sir Bernard Pares's criticisms of the Soviet régime have in the past been outspoken, unfavourable, and backed by all his unparalleled knowledge of Russia as it was : but now he has been back to Moscow, *and he returns impressed*. He writes freely of all he saw : of the work of construction, of social services, education, museums and theatres, law, religion, and much else besides ; and his references to Hitler and Japan in relation to Russia are of the utmost importance to our understanding of international affairs as they are to-day.

Often critical, yet in the main a frank tribute to the work of construction, *Moscow Admits a Critic* is a report on Soviet Russia which must carry weight all over the Western world.

# MOSCOW ADMITS A CRITIC

Bernard Pares

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# MOSCOW ADMITS A CRITIC

## "MY CRIMINAL PAST"

IN Russia one can never be disappointed for lack of contrasts.

The last time I was in Moscow, I was standing in the middle of the vast stage of the huge Zimin theatre, facing an audience of two thousand. I was backed by a most heterogeneous travelling company, of which I was one. It included the famous Vera Zasulich, who started a great ball rolling by firing point-blank at the police general, Fedor Trepov, in 1878, because he had ordered the flogging of a political prisoner. Another famous figure of the older time was Leo Deutsch, celebrated among the student propagandists of the seventies, and one of the earliest prophets of Marxism in Russia. Another of the company was the charming, young, fair-haired idealist, Astakhov, the first officer to join the troops in the rising that resulted in the March Revolution of 1917; among the rest were soldiers of the same regiment, the Volhynians of the guard, who had followed him then. What we were all doing was preaching discipline, and asking for steadfastness in the last stages of the War in the interests of Russia and of the Revolution, both of which, especially the second, were obviously

doomed if Imperial Germany triumphed. On this ground I was making an appeal of an hour in Russian and answering all sorts of Bolshevik hecklers. I was speaking not at all as one of the Allies, for I renounced at the outset any claim or obligation on my audience, but as a long-standing English friend of Russia, and I ended, sinking my voice, with the words: "Let us go together." I wrote in my memoirs afterwards: "Though I did not know it, I was saying good-bye to Moscow, anyhow for many years to come. I wonder whether I shall ever go back there, and under what circumstances." I wondered still more when I again found myself in the Zimin theatre.

I think I could claim to take up the position I did, for Russia had been for me a life study, of which I have told the whole story in *My Russian Memoirs*.<sup>1</sup> After two years of Plato at Cambridge, I had had a revulsion to the concrete, which for me took the form of the Russian peasantry. To prepare for this study, I worked for four years in the other great countries of Europe at their history; then, like Mackenzie Wallace, I isolated myself, along with the Russian language, on an up-country farm, and studied for a time in Moscow University; my chance came, as it has now come again, in 1904, when I saw a glint in the dark sky of Tsarist reaction; from that time onwards I was in Russia for some months every year up till the Great War, at first travelling in peasant districts and studying local administration, and later watching the events and getting to know all the chief personalities in the movement for reform which had not failed to follow. In 1909, for the first time I took a hand myself

<sup>1</sup> Reprinted in a cheap edition (7s. 6d.) by Jonathan Cape in 1935.  
(4,265)

in the movement by bringing over the President and chief party leaders of the third Duma for a visit to England, which was followed by a return visit of representative Englishmen to Russia in 1912 ; committees were set up on the two sides for developing unofficial connections of every kind, and the Russian committee was practically the leaders of the Duma. Meanwhile I had, in 1907, started the School of Russian Studies in Liverpool University, of which the task was to bring that vast one-sixth of the world under the rules and standards of university study ; it conducted a *Russian Review*, to be continued after the War as a *Slavonic Review*, and between them they now run into over fifty fat volumes, with first-hand contributions by the best scholars in both countries on almost every subject. The time of the War I spent almost wholly in Russia with the Russian Army, where I completed, with the help of private soldiers instead of a dictionary, my translation of that Bible of peasant wisdom, the fables of Krylov.

Throughout I kept independent of all parties in both countries, carrying this so far as never to vote at an election ; but, of course, as I was working throughout for the Russian people and not for the Russian Government, I was working for liberty, which I saw advancing all the way up to the War. In the War itself a loyal Englishman naturally had a party, namely, England. When I saw the revolution actually on its road, namely, in October 1916, I did indeed do my best to keep out of it by going up straight to the army, where I was when it took place. But what followed complicated the position for me terribly. Russian party conditions were all bound up with the dominating question, whether

Russia would continue in a war first declared upon herself, and in which we had come to her help. This was the ruling factor in the whole situation. The Bolsheviks were the only party which insisted upon an immediate armistice, and after the colossal casualties and fatigues of the War that cry was sure to carry the whole country. It must not be forgotten that the War was still to continue on other fronts for a year and a half, and that is why so many ardent revolutionaries were in the Zimin theatre with me pleading for its continuance on the Russian side. No one could then have foreseen that after Russia had withdrawn, her Allies, by their final triumph over Germany, would eliminate the German danger for Russia.

In the period of Intervention I was sent by our Government through Siberia, where in one town after another I explained in public addresses the limits of our interference, and stood for a settlement of future questions of government in Russia on the lines of a constituent assembly, such as had been dispersed with violence in Petrograd in January 1918. The posters of my lectures were still all over the town of Ekaterinburg when the Bolsheviks marched in.

Returning at the end of 1919 to my university work in England, though from now onward in London, I set myself to build up a School of Slavonic and East European Studies, and also in public lectures in almost every county of England to counter the propaganda for an application of the Bolshevik principles and programme in this country. During the first period of Communist rule in Russia, that of militant Communism ending in 1921, the two countries were almost entirely cut off

from each other. In the period which followed, that of the so-called New Economic Policy, or NEP—one might almost now say that of the first NEP—administration and practice in Russia came gradually, but steadily nearer to what I might myself have wished for that country, namely, a great development of free peasant initiative on lines similar to those which have marked the co-operative movement in England. It has always seemed ridiculous to me to expect to influence any one by boycott ; and it is equally absurd for a school of study to remain cut off from the country which it is studying ; so I already began to move for at least a renewal of university connections. I wrote a letter in duplicate to the distinguished Communist historical scholar, Professor Michael Pokrovsky, who was then assistant commissary of education, and to my old friend Professor Sergius Oldenburg, still, as before the War, General Secretary of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Without suggesting who was responsible for the break in connections, I proposed the nomination of scholars in Soviet Russia as corresponding members of our School, and invited their contributions to our *Slavonic Review*. To this I received no answer, neither yes nor no ; and I twice found means of repeating my suggestion.

With Stalin's resumption of militant Communism at the end of 1928, relations between the two countries became more strained. However, in 1931, having made the acquaintance of Mr. Saul Bron, at one time head of Arcos in London, I made an application for a *visa* to visit Russia. The details of my proposed trip were most courteously considered by the Intourist agency in London ; but after a short delay I was informed that my

application was refused in Moscow. So far my criminal past stood in the way.

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## WHAT WE OWE TO HITLER

With the advent of Adolf Hitler to power in Germany, there came a complete remodelling of the whole European situation. The peculiar period described as "post-War" came to an end, and new wars loomed upon the horizon.

No country was more affected by the coming of this new epoch than Soviet Russia.

Those of us who have most closely been following Russian affairs had always to recognize, after Germany's failure in the Great War, that nothing could be more natural than an alliance of Germany and Russia in a war of revenge. When Kolchak said good-bye to me in Siberia in 1919, almost his last words were about this: "I am afraid," he said, "that Russia may come to think herself in the position of those who have lost in the War like Germany; and then it would be inevitable that she and Germany would draw closer together. I think that would be a very bad thing for my country; but the day when it happens I shall not be there." He was captured and shot in Irkutsk a few months later. In Germany there was a curious contradiction. The Socialists only sought to play that prominent part which most properly belonged to Germany in the reconstruction of Russia. The Rights, however, and notably Professor

Otto Hoetzsch, did a good deal to prosecute the idea of which Kolchak had spoken ; the Treaty of Rapallo was one of the fruits of this policy. But with Hitler's advent to power any idea of alliance, and even any idea of peaceful collaboration between Russia and Germany went clean through the floor, and for this I, personally, am grateful to Adolf Hitler.

But there were other Russo-German ideas of even longer standing, which, with Hitler, took on a much more acute form. In 1917 a certain Werner Daya published in Munich an interesting little book under the title, *The Advance eastward : Russian Siberia as the objective of German peace economic policy*. The bulk of the book was a careful analysis of the unworked resources of Siberia, which, as the author said, "in competent hands (presumably German) would prove to be a second North America." His formula for the alliance of the future was significant : Germany and Japan *with* Russia—which one found, as one read, meant Germany and Japan in a joint exploitation of the man-power and material sources of Russia. This was to be the road to the *revanche*.

To take first the German side in this possible alliance. Long before Daya and long before the War, Germany and Austria were alike interested in a movement promoted in both these countries for detaching Ukraine from North Russia. Certainly the idiotic policy of the old Imperial Russian Government in trying to force a formal russification on all the various peoples of the Empire gave an excellent grip for such a policy. Liberal Russia, however, which was almost the whole population in the years preceding the War, stood always for

a totally different principle, of which the formula was "the United States of Russia"; and this principle is the only real answer to all Russia's chief difficulties, whether external or internal. With the collapse both of military and of liberal Russia, the Ukrainian movement gained enormously in strength, so that most patriotic Ukrainians did not see any alternative to independence.

The separation of Ukraine from Russia would mean nothing less than the ruin of what remained, with the exception—a very important one—of Siberia. The so-called consuming provinces of the north could not exist without the help of the producing provinces of the south. But apart from that, the separation would involve enormous difficulties both for Muscovite Russia and for Ukraine. There would be an impossibly long and open frontier, which could hardly be defended by the best general staff in Europe. And the two populations are hopelessly interlaced with Ukrainian "colonies" reaching as far east as Vladivostok.

The idea of Ukrainian separation must, of course, raise most difficult questions for the restored Poland. Already when the Bolsheviks were driven in rout from the gates of Warsaw, the Polish counter offensive and the subsequent Treaty of Riga gave Poland enormous tracts both of White Russian and of Ukrainian territory in which the Polish population, almost exclusively of gentry, is not more than one-tenth of the whole. The position of Poland between the Bolsheviks on one side and the Germans on the other was always one of the greatest delicacy, and Marshal Pilsudski may be thought to have done remarkably well in securing agreements of any kind with both. But what will be the position



of Poland if Germany were now to seek conquest or domination in Russia :

Unfortunately the very Bible of Nazism, the *Mein Kampf* of Hitler, which Germans not only may, but must read, does not, as it stands in its official edition, leave any "if" in the matter. Here are the relevant passages :

"Only then will that foreign policy be recognized as right, when within a hundred years two hundred and fifty million Germans will live on this continent, not herded together as factory hands for the rest of the world, but as peasants and workmen, who by their work mutually guarantee a life to each other.<sup>1</sup> . . . When we are talking of more ground and room in Europe, we can in the first place only think of Russia and the border States dependent on her.<sup>2</sup> . . . The gigantic Empire in the East is ripe for collapse, and the end of the Jewish domination in Russia will also be the end of the Russian State itself."<sup>3</sup>

It is true that now a day's journey in the train separates Germany from Russia, but those who were puzzled by the recent deal between Germany and Poland not unnaturally asked whether the unspoken thought is not a partnership for the "liberation" and domination of Ukraine. One must hope that Poland would turn aside from any such bait, for nothing would be more likely to lead to the domination of Poland itself.

The Japanese side of the question may seem more remote, but, I think, it touches us more nearly. Russia and Japan had quite good relations after their war in 1904-5, but when the Russian Empire looked like breaking up in the Civil War, the Japanese were bound to be tempted by the chance of aggrandizement. They

<sup>1</sup> *Mein Kampf* : (Volksausgabe 1932, Franz Eher, Munich), Vol. II., p. 762. <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. II., p. 742. <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. II., p. 743.

took part in the Intervention (I was in that part of the world at the time), but throughout they more or less played a lone hand. They stopped on inside Siberia after the other intervening Powers, but, after apparent hesitation, they decided to go out. The best political critic I met out there, General Gondatti, who had been Governor-General of the Amur Province, thought that the Japanese could not settle in Siberia because of the climate, and he directed my apprehensions farther south, to Burma and India. There was at one time a great wave of Communist propaganda in Japan itself, and we do not realize enough that since then Japanese policy has been in type Nazi, with very much the same antecedents as in Germany. There is an exposition of Japanese policy—it is called the “Will of Tanaka,” who was prime minister in 1927—which has been denounced as a forgery, but all the same is an accurate description of what has been done before Tanaka and after him, and what is going on now. According to this document the programme of Japanese acquisitions from the time of the Emperor Meiji was Formosa (done); Korea (done); Manchuria (practically done); the Japanese Eastern railway (the same); Mongolia (now in the doing); and China (already well on its way). The “Will” goes on to explain that with a Japanese organization of China, Japan can make herself master of the Southern Seas, India, and even the whole of Asia. This seems unreasonable enough, but the recent assassinations of Japanese statesmen would not incline us to rely too much on reason in these matters. Curiously enough, the Cassandra, who warned in vain in this case, turns out to be the ex-Kaiser, William II. In 1910 he definitely

warned the Russian Foreign Minister, Sazonov : " You have only one thing left to do—to take in hand the creation of a military force in China, to make of it a rampart against Japanese aggression. . . . If Russia does not take this matter in hand, Japan will set about the reconstruction of China, and then Russia will lose once for all her Far Eastern dominions and, together with that, her access to the Pacific." The constant series of frontier incidents in the Far East is a running commentary on this menace ; and it must be remembered that after pushing back what was practically the Russian frontier to the river Amur, and robbing the Trans-Siberian of its significance as a world transit line, the Japanese Government continues to contest the revised frontier and even claims that it should be demilitarized, which includes the new circuitous route of the Trans-Siberian along the Amur.

A number of more threatening indications have appeared in the last few years and have not received any convincing denial. We have read in responsible journals of military conversations between Germany and Poland, between Germany and Finland, between Germany and Japan, and even between Japan and Poland, and even of a Japanese offer to re-equip the Roumanian army, and to set up munition factories in Roumania under the supervision of Japanese experts.<sup>1</sup> Is it surprising that Moscow should be anxious ? The latest indications of this anxiety are recent and striking. Stalin has expressed to Mr. Roy Howard<sup>2</sup> the view that the danger is

<sup>1</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, June 13, 1934.

<sup>2</sup> On March 1, 1936, Stalin received Mr. Roy Howard, Chairman of the American press syndicate " Skripps-Howard Newspapers." The interview was published in *Izvestia*, March 5, 1936, and is available in English in the *Moscow Daily News*, March 5, 1936.

equally great on both fronts, and may at any time develop simultaneously on both, and Litvinov, in a recent speech in London, is perfectly justified in maintaining that Hitler is offering peace for twenty-five years in the West in order to have a free hand for action eastward. One has only to read Hitler's own utterances to notice what he is leaving out, and his denunciations of the Franco-Soviet pact fill in the gap clearly enough. Incidentally, we have here a curious reminder of 1914, when Germany, planning an attack on Russia, sent a simultaneous ultimatum to France, threatening and ultimately declaring immediate war if France did not immediately give up her alliance with Tsarist Russia.

It is, truly enough, a period of encirclements. The United States and Soviet Russia encircle Japan ; Japan and the Germany of Hitler encircle Soviet Russia ; Soviet Russia and France encircle Germany ; none of these diplomatic moves have any other sense than that of taking up positions for a possible new war. But there is at least a difference. France, the United States, and most certainly Soviet Russia want the continuance of the *status quo*, and certainly desire peace. The question is, which of the encirclements concerned is really aggressive.

In a complete reversal of conditions in the Far East, we ourselves have to remember that according to almost any military expert, Hong Kong and Shanghai are quite indefensible, as also our part in the trade of China ; that the South Seas do include Australia ; and that the British Empire at present has nothing that is defensible to the east of Singapore.

But fully as significant is the very striking change

which has taken place in the internal policy of Soviet Russia. In an article of April 1935 on this subject<sup>1</sup> I wrote: "When history later reviews this period, perhaps the chief indictment of the present Government of Russia may be the recklessness of conducting an internal warfare on the mass of the population between two foreign wars." I must have been thinking in the same terms as Moscow itself. From 1928 to 1933 the Soviet Government, in imposing its policy of collectivization, was definitely at war with the mass of the Russian peasantry, which is still the great bulk of the population, and had even gone so far as to reduce its participation in the army to thirty-three per cent. We keep a textual record, without comment, of all the chief acts of Soviet Legislation. The laws of 1930-33 are particularly ruthless; here are some of the principal ones: February 1, 1930, on the socialist reconstruction of agriculture and the struggle against the kulaks; February 13, 1931, on responsibility for damaging and wrecking tractors and agricultural machinery; March 27, 1932, on the compulsory socialization of cattle; November 15, 1932, on dismissal of workers and employes for absenteeism from work (even of a single day) with the loss of rations and quarters; December 4, 1932, on the transfer of food distribution to the factory managements and closing of co-operative stores (no work, no food); December 27, 1932, on the introduction of a uniform passport system, which involved the expulsion of at least tens of thousands from Moscow, Leningrad, Harkov, and other cities; January 30, 1933, special gendarmes, or political police, were attached to the machine and tractor stations and

<sup>1</sup> *Slavonic and East European Review*, Vol. XIII., No. 39.

state farms ; March 14, 1933, on the responsibility for acts of sabotage ; April 28, 1933, on the purging of the Party ; July 11, 1933, on the establishment of gendarmes on the railways.

And now Hitler appears on the scene and becomes the dominant factor. On December 11, 1933, we had a decree on exemption from taxation of the population of the Far Eastern provinces (notice the choice of locality for this first alleviation) ; Feb. 27, 1934, a decree on a remission of arrears of grain deliveries ; March 17, 1934, on the calculation of wages in correspondence with the quality and quantity of production (which is practically an emphasis of piecework) ; April 23 to May 16, 1934, four successive acts restoring the earlier principles of education, of which the first is significantly worded " On the over-burdening of school children and pioneers with civic and political training " ; November 29, 1934, on the abolition of the system of rationing. Most significant of all, on February 6, 1935, the Prime Minister, Molotov, announced that a new constitution was being drafted, based on universal, equal, direct, and secret suffrage, with a restoration of the ballot, and an equalization of the peasant vote with that of the workmen—in other words, the famous " four-tailed " formula of the great period of Russian liberalism—and we are told that Stalin himself is directing the work of the drafting committee. There would be no point whatsoever in even announcing such a change unless the Government was sincerely anxious to obtain the goodwill of the population as a whole.

My visit to Moscow is a little thing, but this is the framework in which it is set, and without which my short survey would be unintelligible. In Easter of 1935 I had

visited my Russian emigrant friends in Paris. Alexander Guchkov, now, alas, dead, asked me to address a gathering of Russians of the most different views. I agreed to open a discussion, and to put them a question. After reviewing the situation which I have here described, I put my question : " Which do you like best or least : that Hitler should make a successful invasion of Russia or that the Soviet Government should succeed in defending it ? " " You have set us a hard question," they said, " and we are very much divided about it," and then they proceeded to give their different answers. What became obvious at once was that all the more reasonable among them, for instance, Milyukov and Kerensky, were loyal Russians, and gave the answer which the true mother gives in the judgment of Solomon.

In 1934, and again in 1935, I was asked by the Conference of University Teachers of Russian in British Universities, which meets at our School every year, to approach the Soviet Ambassador on the possibility of renewing educational relations between the two countries. I found Mr. Maisky both sympathetic and helpful. I applied for a *visa* in July. There was a long delay, during which my " criminal past " was no doubt being considered, but towards the end of September the *visa* was granted. I was then at the beginning of a new university term ; but I was glad of the interval, which gave me time to prepare my visit on all sides ; and in the end I went with a clear and detailed educational programme, which would serve very well as a test of the desire in Soviet Russia for more cordial relations.

May I again say how grateful I am to Adolf Hitler.

## A PROGRAMME

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I have mentioned the grave position in which Russian studies have been placed in England by the obstacles to access and connection with Soviet Russia. Literally, the thread of serious study has been cut. Till it has been joined up again, it is impossible that we should have a succession to our great scholars in the past. From the times of Queen Elizabeth it has been Englishmen who have written with the greatest intelligence and sympathy of Russia : Giles Fletcher's *Russe Commonwealth* was always a first source for Russian historians ; but this was because Englishmen settled permanently in Russia, and practically always came to love the country and the people. In our own days the best of all European observers of Russia, as was always recognized by Russians, have been Britishers : Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace, Maurice Baring, and Harold Williams who knew every language of that vast Empire. There are always a few people who can, so to speak, filter in ; but what are the chances of regular study if an ordinary *visa* is obtained only with the greatest difficulty, and is limited, for instance, to a maximum of nine months. Such was recently the case of Mr. Christopher Hill of All Souls. Our own Slavonic School in London, with its separate posts for different subjects, and its special opportunities for postgraduate study, has about half the university teachers in the whole country, and we have, therefore, the responsibility of acting as a kind of clearing-house for



the rest, who have for more than ten years met regularly here once a year. Russians always like to have an official piece of paper, and the chairman, Mr. Goudy of Cambridge, gave me a mandate in Russian for dealing with this question.

I received also applications from several men of science who asked me to secure that, when a discovery or some notable advance is made in Soviet Russia, not only the mere results but the process should be made accessible to us in England. Ordinarily, a short summary in English given at the end is not at all sufficient. We have always had a class for specialists in scientific studies who wished to add Russian to their list of languages, in the hope that they might serve as translators of scientific works. It gratified me that one of the applications which I mentioned came from Lord Passfield, whose views on Russia I have not shared ; another was from the eminent physiologist, Professor A. V. Hill, who recently helped to organize the International Physiological Congress in Leningrad.

But my main object was to secure access for students. Entering Russia not as a friend of Communism but as an Englishman responsible for Russian studies, I took the step of finding out in advance the attitude both of our Foreign Office and also of our Home Office to what I intended to suggest in Moscow. Both were friendly to my idea. It was recognized that if I suggested an exchange of students between the two countries, Russians who came here would be quite expected to praise the institutions of their own country ; it would only be required of them that they should not try to upset ours. I was very glad that I did this, because

the question was raised at once as soon as I got to Moscow.

There were other preparations, which proved illuminating. The expenses of my trip were paid in the lump to the Intourist Agency before I started. There were three classes : first class, presumably for capitalists seeking concessions ; tourist class, for ordinary visitors ; and third class or special, open to university men. Mr. Scheinman, formerly head of the Russian State Bank and now at the head of the Intourist Agency, who gave me every help, put me in this last category. The result was that out of the forty odd pounds which I paid over in London, twenty-six went on the actual journey to and from Moscow, even though I travelled third class through Holland and Germany. This high price, so much greater than of old, was in the main due to the expenses of the German and Polish railways. On the other hand, my stay in Moscow cost me no more than 15s. a day. Meanwhile Mr. Scheinman warned me to buy as little as possible outside what was covered by my ticket. I was due to arrive on December 23rd, and up to the end of the year the legal rate of exchange of the rouble was five and a half to the pound. The exchange which could be obtained on the illegal, or "black" market, was over a hundred and forty, but that, I felt, was entirely closed to me, however often I heard that it was utilized by others. In a Moscow shop I saw a workman buying sweets for his family to the amount of seven roubles ; for me that would have meant about £1, 10s. Clearly foreigners could not be expected to live at such a rate, so there were the Torgsin shops (the word means trade with foreigners) at which pretty well anything could be

obtained in English money, approximately at something like English rates. English currency was also accepted elsewhere, and raised great difficulties for any waiter who made the deal ; for instance, one having no foreign currency to meet the case, offered an apple in lieu of change!

However, at the New Year drastic changes were introduced, such as are only possible with absolute State control. The legal exchange went at one jump from five and a half roubles to twenty-five to the pound. At the same time the Torgsin shops were to be abolished, with a month and a half's grace to minimize the difficulties of foreigners. One can imagine the plight of such a respectable institution as the British Embassy on losing the use of Torgsin, with such a gap between the legal exchange and the free market as twenty-five to a hundred and forty ; and those old invalids, some of them British, outside the Plan, who have been living on parcels dispatched through Torgsin, were even worse off. However, the move was in the right direction. When the rationing system was dropped not long ago, the Government, in its efforts to stabilize, struck a price somewhere between those of the rations and of the free market, and it was now trying to do the same with the currency in order, if possible, to drive the free market out of existence. It is assumed that prices will adjust themselves, and a drastic fall is expected. Various dates were given me for this : April in the Foreign Office, and August in the Commissariat of Foreign Trade.

Before I left London various friends and relatives expressed apprehensions as to my journey, which were quite out of place and unfounded. Also, some of my

Russian emigrant friends in London arranged a kind of little ambushade for me. Innocently regarding my call as nothing more than a dinner engagement, I found myself surrounded by a number of them, who made all sorts of vague hints and suggestions. In the middle sat that fine old soldier, General Denikin, with a white beard, who was over on a visit from Paris, and, as he was the most likely to understand me, in the end I leaned forward and asked him directly : "Which are your apprehensions—physical, moral, or intellectual ?" There was a general laugh, and it was put to me that they were only afraid that I might be taken in by the Bolsheviks. "Well," I said, "that means intellectual. My mind isn't anything to boast of, but I have got a nose." The old general smiled kindly and said : "As long as the nose is in order, it is all right."

I started from London on the evening of 20th December accompanied by the Secretary of the School, who later proved invaluable in taking up and giving effect to all the connections which I was able to establish in Moscow. From the German frontier to Berlin we were in a big third-class carriage, of which the inmates were always changing, yet all the way a clever German lady was quietly making effective criticisms of the Nazi régime. From Berlin the new train went straight through to the Russian frontier. This meant covering the whole of the new Poland. That in itself was a new sensation. Germany used to join on to Russia, and there was no Poland ; it was just the same country, but now one travelled for close on twenty-four hours under a new flag. I was particularly watchful, as we approached the new Russian frontier. It began at a village called Negoreloe in quite

flat country, and in the middle of nothing in particular. The spot was familiar to me, as it was almost exactly the actual line at which the Russian retreat was stopped in the autumn of 1915, and here I had wintered with the Third Russian Army in the Pinsk marshes among the slushy towns and villages of this desolate area. The population on both sides of the line was White Russian, with a mere sprinkling of Poles, who are, however, making vigorous colonizing efforts in these parts.

By the next morning I was in Moscow—so near is the new frontier—and was picking out all the old remembered sights on the long Tverskaya, till the familiar Red Square, with the Kremlin and St. Basil, stood up in front of me as if I had never been away.

The hotel to which we were assigned was the Novo-Moskovskaya, a great big building of eight floors, on what might be called the Surrey side, looking straight over the little river and down on to the top of the low hill which is the Kremlin. There was everything, both in provision and in attention, that could make for the visitors' comfort, except that there was much too much of what the bourgeois asks for and I do not—particularly a jazz band and two outrageous American female singers, who strummed all wrong on two grand pianos, facing away to the audience and singing their vulgar songs.

The British Embassy is now housed in the mansion of Haritonenko, which is a monument of mercantile magnificence. It stands directly facing the river and the Kremlin, a very different position from the old Embassy in Petersburg, which always seemed to be part of a barracks, and not in Russia at all. I obtained the wise counsels of our Ambassador—now, in glaring contrast

to pre-War days, there is not a member of the staff of the Embassy who does not know or is not learning Russian. I explained my object to him as a kind of friendly challenge, a question whether they would not join us in opening the doors to an exchange of study. He sent me on to Mr. Litvinov, who showed particular kindness in receiving me without delay, because at that time he was anything but well. Litvinov agreed at once to our access to information on the achievements of science in Russia. He also promised favourable consideration for *visas* for my university colleagues. When I passed on to the exchange of students, he asked at once whether Russian students might be arrested in England as propagandists, and I was very glad to be able to give him the answer which I have mentioned above. He saw much more difficulty in my further request for a special hostel, both of Russian and British students, with a block charge to avoid the disadvantages of the exchange. I asked also for contributions from Soviet scholars to our *Slavonic Review*—which was a much more delicate matter. He replied that we had contributions from Russian emigrants, and that Soviet writers would therefore not be willing to collaborate. I answered that we were a British university institution and must seek contributions from every side that was open to us. “We do not pretend to agree with you in everything,” I said, “but we are anxious to put your point of view, and we have already printed a particularly good speech which you made at Geneva.” This question was left unsettled, but I was passed on to others with goodwill for the prosecution of my programme.

With the exception of the one thorny question that

I have mentioned, I had no further difficulty. From the institution known as Voks, which exists to further intellectual connections with other countries, I received the most cordial help that can be imagined. Mr. L. N. Chernyavsky, a typical representative of the high standard of university education in Russia, went through every detail of my programme with me, helping to elucidate it at every point. He also overwhelmed us with kindness of every sort in his arrangements for visits to institutions, schools, law courts, theatres, and every manifestation of public life. I chose my own programme, as I had written it down at the Soviet Embassy in London.

I was referred to Professor Pinkevich, who is in charge of the universities in the Commissariat of Education, and I was able to carry my objects nearly to completion. We made detailed arrangements for access to Russian scientific achievements. The Professor also welcomed the exchange of students with the words : "The time is ripe for it." He was in favour of lengthened *visas* to cover a full course of university study, and also of the idea of a common hostel as soon as the recent changes in currency should make it possible. We discussed the setting up of a small council on the British side to certify the academic status of the British students concerned. The fact that they were not likely at first to be numerous made it more possible for them to be dealt with by special arrangements ; and as many of them would be students on the scientific side, the difficulties of the question of propaganda would thereby fall into the background. My task was concluded by a final thorough-going examination with Voks of all the details concerned. On their side, they were anxious to have any communi-

cations or connections we could get for them as to congresses or other events in the British world of learning, and the generous help which they offered to our own School here was the best proof of the spirit in which they had received my proposals.

## MOSCOW AT THE NEW YEAR

Within an hour of my arrival at the hotel I was wandering freely about the streets and mixing with the crowds of holiday makers. Some of my friends have refused to believe that I was not followed throughout. I have a nose for that kind of thing from earlier times, and especially from certain periods of the War, when I had several amusing incidents. So I was rather on the watch for anything of the kind ; but there was nothing whatever to notice, and almost from the first the whole idea disappeared from my mind. I went out by myself whenever I felt inclined to, and strayed casually in any direction that suggested itself. I am not discussing whether people were not followed earlier ; I am only giving my own experiences. If one moves in a heavy coat and snow-shoes at a slow pace across a great empty snow-covered square, it would hardly be difficult to notice whether any one followed, or if there was any sign of interest on the other side.

My first feeling, on finding myself again walking the streets of Moscow after so long an interval, was one of surprise at the simplicity of it all. Petersburg, Petrograd,



or Leningrad—whichever you like to call it, following as Sam Weller said “ the taste and fancy of the speller ”—was a place that I always hated : in fact, I should not have been sorry for the plough to go over it. Moscow was, and still is, a home—some one else’s home it may be, but anyhow a home—and here one knows that one is at the heart of the Russian people, which, whatever it is called, is still the Russian people. When I was a student in Moscow in 1898, I used, for the sheer sake of the sense of home in it, to walk through the Kremlin every day ; and now, though the Kremlin has returned to its early rôle as a fortress—this time the fortress of Communism—I was constantly walking past it and all round it, and from my hotel I had a full view into it. There it stood, just as before, though now turned to different uses. The only notable difference was that a large gilt star was fixed to the top of each of the main gates or pinnacles, but this one soon gets used to. And, generally speaking, though numbers of the churches in Moscow have been closed, most of them are still there, so that the familiar view of the city remains. More and more, as my stay continued, the thing which stood out was Russia and the Russians, which were always there and always will be ; and USSR, with its principles and its policy and its press, seemed to me to be something not essential to it, though not necessarily discordant, which was placed so to speak on its surface. This was the first and the last thought of my visit.

I was constantly roaming the streets in this way, going through the big shops, watching the streams of buyers and noting the great accumulation of stores of every kind. My general impression was almost the same as

that of the busy Christmas purchasing season in London from which I had just come. The Moscow "Selfridge" or "Army and Navy Stores" might here belong to the State—and why should that be regretted?—but there was the same plenty of all the most useful things and the same busy buying. I nowhere noticed a superfluity of luxuries. There were signs of attention to smartness, but the general impression was one of well-being. I was quite aware, both from what I knew before and from what I heard in Moscow, that it was totally different two years ago, and, indeed, there was a general sense of satisfaction, novelty, and even surprise in the general mood.

Familiar snatches of Russian conversation floated past me as I walked along the streets. It was the ordinary sort of talk which I might have heard in London—frank, open, and familiar, and on subjects of everyday interest. One knew of the earlier theoretical attack on the family and its various appearances in legislation, but here were the families as they used to be before, father and mother perhaps holding their children by the hand and taking their pleasure together. Hats were in general at a discount; in fact, the cap which I wear when I go to League football matches was the general fashion; and fortunately I had mine with me; but the people were neatly dressed—which is naturally more noticed in winter costumes—especially the children, and the general impression was that they were also well fed (I noticed this particularly at a workers' club).

One got the same impression from the street traffic, which was particularly visible from the windows of my hotel. It reminded me somehow of my stay in Boston,

perhaps my favourite city in the States, where I used to gaze from a distance at it in the same way. Looking down on a fairly central part of the city, it was a constant stream of cars and trams ; of the latter there were seldom less than three in sight at once, and each of them consisted of three long separate carriages, for the snow-storms of Russia would not favour high-deckers. The last innovation is the trolley-bus, pronounced " trolly-bus," as, for instance,

*In omnibus rebus  
Excellit trolleybus.*

So they seem to have found ; for these are also to be used at night for carrying goods to their destinations.

I have always felt at home in great crowds of the common folk, and far more than anywhere else in England and Russia, for it is the great underground Russia that always fascinated me in the past. Personal worries, and even personal distinctiveness, disappear when you are thus " in the lap of the people." You share equally in its geniality, and every chance neighbour is a friend. Once you have the language, all the sights and sounds are common to you as to any one else, including the posters on the streets, which were here most numerous. They are short, easily readable sentences in white letters on a red ground, and they are all over the place. I noted down several of them in the great Park of Rest and Culture, the new playground of the city on the west side, where, in spite of a miserable thaw and drizzle, which had upset all the plans for skating competitions, every one seemed good tempered and all were enjoying themselves. In particular there was a

children's city into which no others were admitted ; and at another point holiday makers were being let down in turn by parachutes, to which, however, I noticed that a rope was attached, with small groups of soldiers at the bottom to help to smooth the contact with the ground. Here are some of the posters or short notices : "Greetings to a New Year and new triumphs" ; "Hurrah for the best friend of physical culture—our native, beloved Stalin" ; "What October has done for me" ; "We must have soap" ; "It (Russia) is growing and getting strong" ; one of the commonest of all is "The cadres settle everything."

One of the chief features of these posters is the ubiquity of Stalin, who comes out as the national leader responsible for everything ; for instance, the children "thank Comrade Stalin for a bright and happy childhood." Stalin has no post in the Soviet Government and is General Secretary of the Communist Party. It is almost as if Communism were being absorbed into the other peculiarities of Russia, or, to change the metaphor, as if after the revolution we had Napoleon. I was shown some propaganda films, of which the longest was a great parade of physical culture on the Red Square. It was a splendid show, and the innumerable units went past with a swing and in perfect order. I can imagine that in a film of the Cup Final in England the machine might at one moment turn on to the King and his escort applauding, but here, after each separate unit went past, it moved back to Stalin and his little group of hierarchs, who were always displayed in the same order, with Voroshilov, head of the Red Army, on his right, and the Prime Minister, Molotov, only on his left. Though this

is a significant detail, it does not spoil the general impression of the whole.

Certainly there was, in all I saw, no suggestion whatever of a sullen and disgruntled people wondering when it could be relieved of a hated Government. We must remember, of course, the wholesale deportations from Moscow on the introduction of the internal passport system in December 1932. Every one who lives in Moscow now, and that means three million people or more, has to earn the right to do so by taking a hand in the vast work of construction which is everywhere in progress. That is, they are all playing a part in the big movement; and it is also quite clear that if one speaks only of Moscow, and I spent the whole of my month there, they are already profiting by doing so.

I kept on asking myself the question: how much of all this is the people, or, in other words, to what extent the circle of public support around the Government has widened—both as compared with what I learned from other visitors of two years ago and, perhaps far more, as compared with my own instinct so well remembered out of pre-revolution times. To what extent was the Government a foreigner to the people? In the times of Tsardom I had never failed to feel its almost complete isolation. The Ministers of those times, and more especially in the last days of Tsardom, were for the most part obviously haphazard choices from a very narrow and by no means distinguished circle. I was, of course, one of those who longed to see the Russian public, as a whole, make its way into the precincts of government, and in 1917 for a very short time I had that satisfaction.

But even then there was the much less definable barrier though a very real one, which separated the Russian intelligentsia from the great mass of the Russian public. Never did I feel this more clearly than when seeing the country gentry in the ocean of their surrounding peasantry; it was not in the slightest that they were unsympathetic; on the contrary, I often even saw great excesses of altruism in their dealings with the peasants and their whole attitude towards them. But at the same time I thought that they were intellectually separated from them by their consciousness of their better education, which with them took the form not so much of patronizing, but of lecturing. Educated Russians of all sorts, and this applied to officials, officers, schoolmasters, and revolutionary propagandists, seemed to me to regard the working folk far too much as recipients of any of the various lessons which they wished to teach them. I have to say that in Moscow to-day this frontier seems to have disappeared altogether, and in my many visits to public offices and great institutions Government and people were of the same stock.

It was not easy to test this as I should have wished. One had some street talks, but it was only rarely that they developed into anything of general interest. One thing I did find: that the attitude to the danger of a joint attack from east and west was the same on the street as it was in the Foreign Office. "I have been through two wars," said an old soldier to me, "and now I shall have to go through another; of course it will be Germany and Japan, and possibly Poland, and, I should say, very likely Italy too," though here surely his imagination strayed very far ahead.

I made no attempt to see any old friends. There was one, perfectly harmless and no politician, though bearing a great name, to whom I was able without any difficulty to convey a message that I would dearly love to see him, if he thought he could meet me. After a couple of days I learnt that he was very upset about it, but did not wish to take the risk. Of course I was able to talk throughout not only with representatives of the Government, but with persons in charge of any institution, for instance a school or a museum, and as I always clearly expressed my own view, such conversations were full of interest for me. There were guides to introduce me to this institution or that, but they did not embarrass me in any way, and I conducted my own conversations: in fact, I also found them useful in discussing questions of interest. I met, too, a number of foreign diplomatists serving in Moscow, with whom I was of course able to talk quite freely.

But specially valuable to me were a number of young Englishmen, some of them previously known to me, as Senior Treasurer of the Students' Union of London University, who had taken up professional posts as specialists of various kinds in the enormous work of planning. They were attracted hither, for the most part, not by communist abstractions, but by the vast and inspiring scope of this huge work. They attributed the wholesale change that had taken place in living conditions to the last two years, and above all to the year 1935. In 1933 they too had witnessed how ragged creatures stood at street corners speculating in black rye bread. They had themselves lived through the bad times, and they still regarded the housing problem as acute. But

they looked back on that time as one of a tightening of all belts, which has now definitely yielded the promised results.

## CONSTRUCTION

The First Five Year Plan was the first expression of Stalin's particular process of making the USSR self-sufficing, even if the rest of the world remained non-Communist, and thus, among other things, of giving the country that heavy plant which could make it independent of supplies of munitions from abroad, which was the first of all lessons of the last war. As far as Moscow is concerned, one could certainly say that the time had been reached when the results of this policy were already being distributed. To take another side, attention was now being devoted to the levelling up of quality, so that Russia should no longer need to send half-finished goods to be completed abroad. More important still, Soviet Russia is also trying to make herself more independent of foreign experts. This has always been in view from the time of Peter the Great ; and we were always being told that the foreign specialists were only there to teach the Russians to manage for themselves. From the evidence which I had from British specialists now at work there, sometimes in very far-flung fields, it would certainly seem that in the very last few years a good deal more real progress was being made in that direction than in any previous period.

One of my most capable postgraduate students, who



spent some years in Moscow up to 1933, returned while I was there. That was a time of visible confusion, when a whole number of first-class tasks were in process of being tackled. On her return she saw so many huge buildings completed that she even found it difficult to remember her way about. I recall rather vividly the very remarkable setting up of new big buildings in Moscow in that prosperous period of some eight or nine years which just preceded the Great War. It is altogether eclipsed by what has happened now; and, as some of my British specialist friends put it to me, the latest achievements have a much more solid and permanent look than some of the earlier constructions of the First Five Year Plan. In type many of them were very pleasing and in no way spoilt the old Moscow for me. Certainly they gave the appearance everywhere that the planning had reached the end of a given stage.

Throughout, I am in no way speaking of anything outside Moscow. This city, always the real heart of Russia, is now the central workshop of the whole; and, especially since the wholesale expulsions, it must be regarded as a hive of workers, all of whom are taking an active part in the great movement. The streets are far better paved, and I had a particularly good opportunity of seeing how well they were looked after, because, during my stay there, there was one of the heaviest remembered falls of soft snow, which, most unseasonably, vanished all at once, leaving conditions which had to be cleared up directly, if the streets were again to become passable, and this work was carried out with admirable promptness. As to the rest of the country, I could only take opinions from those British

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specialists of whom I have already spoken ; but they—and particularly one elderly American who had held a high post in the work of construction in the Urals—told me some very striking things about the rapidity with which even “peasants of yesterday,” often after initial and sometimes very amusing mistakes, were adapting themselves to the use of hitherto unknown machinery, and even sometimes making inventions of practical value. His younger British confrères, mostly at work in Moscow itself—I met several and heard of about forty of them—were literally inspired by the vast scope of the work accessible to them, such as they might have found in America, but hardly in England. One young man had to fight his way, within a given fixed time, through the work of setting up new telephone communication between Moscow and Leningrad, with a queer host of Asiatic collaborators and sometimes almost cut off from food supplies. This was not a question of communism but of hard practical work. Another told me of the rapid change of directors of his work, and the decisive part played by the vigorous corporate criticism of those employed. All through, the principle asserted is that the planning must first start from below, to be corrected by the central planning authorities, who are responsible for the general result ; and certainly, where general unanimity has been achieved, this principle has, in very many cases, been actually realized.

The feature of the moment is the Stakhanov movement, of which much has already been written in England. A miner in the Donets Basin, Stakhanov, greatly exceeded the task allotted to him in the plan. This, with his chiefs and others, led to a great deal of

criticism as to whether it was consistent with Communism and could be allowed. But Stalin was very clear in the matter, regarding it, as it certainly was, as a development which could lead to greater enthusiasm and effectiveness if copied elsewhere. Stakhanov, and the very many who have since imitated him, have received unstinted praise and approval. Posters in the streets and elsewhere describe the "Stakhanov men" as "the best citizens of the Motherland." One woman worker succeeded in doing as much as twenty-nine times the task assigned to her. In the various factories, the names of the Stakhanov men are posted up, with the details of their achievements. As work in the USSR is now on the basis of piecework, the amount of payment follows the achievement, I believe, even with a graduated increase, and it is not an uncommon thing for a worker in this way to be able to earn as much as three times what his director is receiving. Undoubtedly, the movement has stimulated production in the highest degree. I do not know what Marx would have said of it. It may, of course, be said that Stakhanov is working for a socialist state and not for any capitalist; but there remains also the very important fact that the wage depends on production, and this, as in any other country, would be sure to lead to an increased output.

Another of the most frequently seen posters is a quotation from Stalin: "Now, comrades, life is better, life is brighter"; and this corresponds to the mood of the time. The New Year celebrated—curiously enough, with Christmas trees everywhere—the achievements of a bumper predecessor; and this was reflected everywhere in the general tone. It is, I repeat, the year 1935 that

has done much the most to make these results visible to all. A foreign diplomat in Moscow, clearly not over-friendly to communism, speaking of the Plan, remarked : "They have won all along the line."

This was a time of all-important government meetings, and the motto was everywhere displayed that the New Year must lead to new triumphs. The hotel in which I stayed seemed at times to be filled with delegations from the country, for instance from the collective farms, which were received in the Kremlin and came back obviously stimulated by the encouragement which had been given them. In contrasting with Russia of the past, I could not fail to notice a new and much more purposeful look on the faces, not only of those in some position of authority, but of the ordinary inhabitants. That is something which one only too often missed in the past. I might add that all the old signs of pauperism in Moscow—often so obtrusive, as, for instance, the distorted and misshapen limbs that were stretched out to one by the beggars lying at the gates of churches—have disappeared altogether. Neither did one see any signs of the great epidemic of waifs and strays which was at a given time one of the most serious embarrassments of the Communist Government. These had vanished from the streets altogether, and what had been done with them I was to see later.

Let us take it, then, that there is no doubt, as far as Moscow is concerned, that a definite stage of achievement and prosperity has been reached. One would have to know a great deal more of the life of the country as a whole to be able to define to what extent one can discount future interruptions or reverses of this prosperity;

for instance, to what extent is it due to good harvests, and what is the measure of stabilization of the new system of collectivized agriculture, as a guarantee against the old dependence on the crop of the year. But there is, anyhow, at this time nothing to suggest such a reaction. In the Museum of the Revolution, an admirably planned historical summary of popular movements from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries down to the present moment, I saw in one of the last rooms a caricature which I should much like to reproduce. The bourgeois, with the traditional top-hat and cigar, hears of the Five Year Plan, and expresses his incredulity ; in the next picture, he is looking up with a rather bored interest and the word : " Indeed ! " and in the third, the top-hat and cigar are gone, and he is exclaiming : " Well, really ! " The makers of the plan are entitled to this satisfaction.

So much for the present ; but when one looks at the plans for the future, some of which are already nearly completed, one can see what immense attraction they must have for any young and vigorous mind seeking a scope for active work. None of the many interesting museums is, perhaps, so enthralling as the " Exhibition of Construction " on the western outskirts of Moscow. A glance at a map of European and Asiatic Russia, which lights up as it is explained to the listener, shows some ninety-seven new towns, of which a whole number lie in an area till then entirely neglected, the Kuznetsk Basin in the neighbourhood of Tashkent at the back of India. Industry in the Urals alone, which were always one of the chief industrial areas of Russia, has increased fivefold. Colossal plans of new towns, already largely

executed and sometimes involving the creation of great tracts of water, have been so arranged, in accordance with the local climatic conditions, as to carry all the smoke from the industrial centre away from the living quarters. In one case, by a mistake, the centre of a large city was planned for an area which proved to be bog ; but measures have been taken to change it into solid ground. Plans for the future include the turning of some of the great waterways southward ; for instance, to irrigate the vast desert area lying to the south of the great farm product region of Western Siberia. The Don is to be united to the Volga, with radical changes in the depth of the latter and in conditions in the Caspian Sea. Most impressive of all is the scheme which will make Moscow nearly double its present size by a vast extension westwards, including the famous Sparrow Hills. The Moscow River—which, by its various bends before reaching the city, is so reminiscent of the Thames west of London or the Seine west of Paris—becomes something like a straight line ; water is being brought uphill from the Volga, far to the north, by means of locks crossing the watershed, utilizing on its road the river Klyazma, which it turns into a series of lakes, and converting Moscow into a port with two harbours, to the north and to the south. The old open circles on the ancient lines of bulwarks (or boulevards) are to be increased to the number of seven, with a provision for areas of greenery in each circle.

There is one thing which I should say, as one who knows something about the vast unworked resources of Russia. I heard a great deal about the working of the gold mines in the Urals ; there is ever so much more in

the Altai and on the Pacific shores ; and personally I have no doubt at all that the next great increase in the gold supply of the world will come from Russia.

It seems to me not only possible, but natural, to discriminate between the vast material success which all this will represent and those features of government in Soviet Russia that up to this time have called for criticism here. This was also the verdict of a foreign diplomat, one of the wisest observers whom I met in Moscow, who had followed the whole story of the Revolution from its very start. I will even go a little further. Several times I seemed to sense that the satisfaction at the success of construction was moving the theoretical and aggressive articles of Party belief into the background. Always taking up each question that presented itself, I felt as if the answers on this side had something half-hearted about them—almost as if a clever young curate were saying to me : “ But I must remind you that I have signed the Thirty-nine Articles of religion.” In much that I saw I often asked myself what was the difference from what I might have seen in a country which did not pretend to be anything different from the ordinary.

## SOCIAL SERVICES

For those “ outside the Plan,” and especially for the old and unwanted, Moscow is still a cruel place, and the deprivation of Torgsin is in many cases the loss of the last plank of salvation. It is the aim of the Government



to bring the whole population into the Plan : and in the Plan there is much care for the old and invalided. This is why the vital question is the number of those "outside the pale." I asked several questions about it, but it is not to be estimated independently in Moscow ; for since the wholesale expulsions Moscow is practically all inside the Plan, and work in it is the first condition of food and housing. With the introduction of the passport system, many thousands of persons were expelled, including many of the old and infirm, to shift for themselves as best they could elsewhere, with the probability that they would later again be pushed farther on. Their places were occupied, and more than occupied, by twice their number of new-comers recruited into the intensive work of the capital. Thus the general conditions of the country are not to be judged from Moscow ; but as Moscow is the nerve-centre of the country, the conditions in this beehive are intended for extension to the rest. All this means that the housing problem is only aggravated, and is likely to remain acute for some time to come. That the question is, in the long run, being dealt with, will be seen from what I have said of the colossal plans for almost doubling Moscow ; but that itself will for a time only make it more acute. The question is at present a very sore one, probably the sorest spot in the present situation ; and it is probable that the next big concentration of purpose will be directed on to it. For those in regular employment there is already a great improvement on the desperate conditions of some two years ago ; quarters, for one in employment, may cost ten per cent. of the salary. Some of the young wives of English specialists told me something about

their budget, and clearly household purchases were the main item. I have already spoken of the exchange, and that question will have to be left to define itself.

On the other hand, the responsibility which the State accepts for its employees in the way of social services is far more extensive than with us here. Education, which is so very heavy a charge for our own middle class, is practically off the map ; and health, which receives an altogether more systematic attention, is also free of charge. One of the wives, when attacked by tuberculosis, had long hospital treatment, a serious operation, and a convalescence in Crimea without any expense. A brilliant young Oxford student, who had only found untidy and insanitary quarters, was attacked by double mastoids, with imminent danger of meningitis ; he was removed with exemplary promptitude to a very good hospital, where I visited him, and the dangerous double operation, successfully performed by a first-class surgeon, was also free of charge.

I did not wish my visits to social institutions to be haphazard ; and I asked to see all that were associated with a given large district. The area chosen was in the north of Moscow with a population of 65,000, consisting chiefly of those connected with the work of two factories, one very large and the other considerable. The large factory produced rubber ; I had visited it in 1904. The manager, who seemed to me a very capable man, explained the work. There were 8,000 workers working in three shifts of eight hours a day. Since the Stakhanov movement—and he had very many Stakhanov men in the factory—the output had so increased that, in order not to exceed the task

assigned in the Plan, he had had to dispense with 800 workers, who, however, had had no difficulty in finding other employment. In ordinary cases of dismissal the man concerned had the right to an appeal, which was examined by a commission representative, both of the factory and of its Trade Union. There was a broad scheme of pensions, taking into account not only old age and accidents, but what are called work-invalids, or those who have been worn out by their work.

I did not see the local school as I had paid two visits to a similar one elsewhere. The hospital serving the whole of this area was of magnificent proportions, and its arrangements were the last word for the avoidance of infection, which was guarded against by all sorts of different entries and compartments. I had often seen unexpectedly up-to-date hospitals in the old pre-War days of the Town and County Councils; but these elected Councils had always been hampered and restricted by the old government, and now this was a very central part of the provision of the State itself. Workers destined for factories undergo a preliminary examination to determine the kind of work for which they are best fitted. Very special attention is given to childbirth. As soon as this is in prospect the expectant mother is relieved of all night work and assigned to easy tasks; she is kept under regular medical supervision till the birth, before which she will have been moved into hospital well before the time, and afterwards a second doctor is assigned to the child. As soon as she is allowed to resume work, the crèche, during working hours, will take care of her child. I visited this one, and its only disadvantage seemed to me the distance which the

mother might have to carry the child on her way to and from work. From the age of three to seven the kindergarten—a name which translates admirably into Russian—takes over the care of the child. The one in question was a charming wooden house standing among pine trees. Its bright rooms were attractively equipped with flowers, plants, pictures, toys, etc.

Sport is a side which is strongly developed for the men workers. It includes skating, hockey, and football, and the teams compete keenly in local leagues.

I saw, separately, an admirable institution connected with child welfare, which, though less necessary here with our relatively small distances, would be very valuable in America. It is called "Mother and Child." At each big railway terminus a quite considerable section of the station is set aside for this institution, which takes care of children, especially babies, brought by their mothers from a long distance—it might be from Vladivostok; special account was taken of a baby travelling with its father only. The parent can leave the child here while going into the town to make any arrangements for future work and quarters. It is washed, fed, and thoroughly looked after, and is in the care of a lady doctor. There is even a lawyer who can be consulted free of charge. There was a variety of rooms—dormitories, play rooms, and rest rooms, and reading rooms for the parents. At the time when I came, to my surprise, children of all ages and sizes were dancing round a Christmas tree to music, and evidently enjoying it vastly. The surprise was the Christmas tree, which used to be prohibited, but now, as applied to the New Year, is in evidence everywhere; just a regular Christmas tree,

with candles, crackers, little presents, and all the rest, and even Father Christmas, with the traditional red cloak and white beard. This must really be Stalin, in view of the poster, on which the children "thank Comrade Stalin for a bright and happy childhood."

No institution impressed me more than Bolshevo, the vast establishment some twenty miles north of Moscow for waifs and strays. The young man of thirty-two who showed me over was one of the earliest inmates (the twenty-fifth), and was now Chairman of the Reception Committee. He looked me straight in the eyes, and told his story very frankly. At the age of eleven he had lost his father, mother, and brothers in the War or the Civil War. He was left on the streets, "and I, what is called, stole." He was sentenced by a court, and was sent here. As time went on, he established a right to the cancellation of his sentence and restoration of his rights of citizenship, and became a member of the Komsomol, and ultimately reached his present position. Bolshevo started with thirteen inmates in 1924. It now has 3,700, and this year the number will be increased to 4,500, while 400 will be sent on to other work, as has happened with several hundreds already. In the very full explanations which he gave me I only felt inclined, perhaps, to criticize an excess of supervision, not at all necessarily of a punitive kind; but this was an institution to correspond to our Borstal. Inquiries were made into any social failure of the given individual—for instance, drunkenness; the whole question was gone over with him; if a rebuke were not attended to, a certain control over his habits would be imposed, such as requiring him to cease acquaintance with a given

undesirable friend. Similarly, proposed marriages between members of this great settlement were examined in advance in the interests of both parties. All this was the work of the "life" Committee.

Another strongly developed side of the corporate life was under the Cultural Committee. There were grounds for football, tennis, hockey, and skating, and the teams held a high place in the competitions of the Moscow area. Dancing and music were encouraged, also dramatics, and I found that the living quarters were sometimes so allotted that the members of a given "society" lived all together, and thus were at any time able to rehearse the entertainments which they were preparing. The art work included a number of remarkable paintings produced here, mostly *genre*, and some of them excellent types of portraits. The settlement boasted a champion child chess player. The stores and restaurant were first-rate, and there was an admirable hospital with 114 beds and 800 out-patients. Sometimes institutions of this kind have been regarded by ignorant critics as little more than a façade, but I should be glad to see more of them, with this scope of efficiency and active life, in my own country.

On the eve of my departure I attended a large meeting at a workers' club, that of the railway men of the Kazan Railway, to hear an address from a young member of the Central Committee of the Government on Socialism and Communism. The club was a spacious and attractive building. The workers were neatly clothed, and many of them looked very intelligent. Government meetings at this time were long and arduous, and I think that the speaker must have been tired, and cer-

tainly he seemed nervous, but he was definitely an exception to the rule in Russia by which practically every one can explain himself with lucidity and interest. He evidently wanted two hours for his lecture, and, not long after the first hour, a number of little tots entered the audience in expectation of a promised cinema show, and the chairman, another young man in uniform, more or less stood over him with watch in hand, which must have been very disconcerting.

The address was long and tedious. The point of it was that socialism was a very good thing in its way, but that it should lead on to communism: how, was not explained. Beginning with Saint Simon and Fourier, the speaker explained that the early socialists were on the right track, but were not able to formulate their ideas, which was done for the first time by Marx and Engels. Then followed numbers of quotations from Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin. The speaker had a slow and hesitating manner, and the workmen commented on his youth; throughout the address many of them scribbled down questions on slips of paper, which they rolled up, and literally bombarded the platform with them. The chairman walked about picking up the slips and putting them into some kind of order. When at long last the speaker stopped, he declared a short interval, after which the questions, now more carefully and logically arranged, were answered. Here are some of them: Will there be property under Communism? (The speaker seemed doubtful; not so, the audience.) Will there be marriage under Communism? (The speaker explained that parents always cared about their children, and would therefore probably wish to build

a home.) Will the Stakhanov movement be allowed to continue under Communism? A question which was very much to the point. Is it really possible to equalize different people's abilities? This was perhaps the best question of all. The speaker again quoted the famous formula that the State would take from every one according to his ability and give to every one according to his need, but did not offer a more detailed answer. It was evident from comments that the address had rather missed fire.

## EDUCATION

I was already familiar with the considerable change which had taken place in education, as I had checked the translation of the decrees in question from *Izvestia* for our *Slavonic Review*. It was just in this field, which happened to be my own, that some of the most significant reforms had been made. There was the very interesting decree of April 23, 1934, on the "overburdening of school children and Pioneers with civic and political training." There was that of May 16, 1934, on the system of elementary and secondary schools in the USSR; it was practically nothing more or less than a return to the pre-War system, which was a particularly good one. There were also two other decrees of the same date on "the teaching of civic history in schools in the USSR" (my own subject), and on "the teaching of geography" in the same. Our January number, published while I was in Moscow,



contained the extensive decree of 8th August, countersigned by Stalin, on the publication and sale of textbooks for elementary, secondary, and high schools, which involved a complete revision of the earlier supply. The old system of marking was restored and even uniforms were brought back, and they were to be "smart." Also, discipline was to be restored in full: all the pupils were to show respect for their teachers, and generally for their elders, and also for the school property.

I was told by one of the higher educational authorities in Moscow that the change had come from Stalin himself. "What," he is reported to have asked, "will a present-day Soviet schoolboy be able to tell you about Napoleon? Perhaps that it is the name of a piece of pastry"; presumably the "Napoleonschaumtort," or Napoleon cream tart; and he insisted that the teaching of history should in future give emphasis to personalities, facts, and events. If this is correct, it would certainly be in line with the place which the personality of Stalin himself now occupies in Russia. Everywhere, in streets, schools, and public places, one sees in large letters short quotations from his utterances. Large-sized portraits of him and of his principal collaborators are displayed on the landings of the schools and in public offices.

This is the more interesting because Stalin, as has been mentioned, does not occupy any official post in the Soviet Government as such. He is simply the General Secretary of the Communist Party; but it is the Communist Party which not only governs Russia, but claims to lead the Communists of the world through the Third International. It may be added that, with a frankness which did not mark the preceding period, laws are now

generally issued from the Government and Party, or even from the Party and Government. This also throws a light on the constant representations of Litvinov that the Soviet Government does not control the Third International; as a matter of course, the Communist Party controls both.

Very great work on history was done by the late Professor Michael Pokrovsky, an intimate friend and collaborator of Lenin. He had an amazing opportunity. The Revolution put at his disposal masses of first-class historical material, not only in the shape of contemporary personal diaries and documents, but also important records and memorials in the history of popular uprisings from the time of Razin and Pugachev, which could not have reached the public under the autocracy; these materials help to form the nucleus of the admirably arranged Museum of the Revolution. With the help of competent collaborators, Pokrovsky made a first-class use of this exceptional treasury. Whatever might have been expected, I have not come on a single instance in which the accuracy of a contemporary document published by the Soviet Government has been challenged by its author. Very different was the policy adopted in universities and schools as to the study of history. To all intents and purposes the old teaching of history as such was scrapped. Different parts of it appeared under other headings, prescribed by purely abstract formulas.

One of the most striking of present-day developments is the return to the old system. "We are returning," said the head of the restored Faculty of History of the University of Moscow, "from abstractions and theories to facts and the concrete, with interest in events and

personalities." Four Chairs have now been established in Moscow, and similarly in several other universities, such as Kazan and Saratov, and are to be set up in the remaining universities. In Moscow the subjects of these professorships are just what they might have been before the War : eastern and ancient, mediæval, modern, and Russian history. Pokrovsky's dreary bias, with its indifference to historical personalities, is gone, and his work is now derided in the official Press.

While I was in Moscow another still more important change was made ; a decree was issued abolishing the old restrictions, based on class origin, in admission to the universities. From the introduction of systematic public education under Alexander I (1801-25), Russia has been a battle-ground between the rival principles of light and darkness—the ladder system, open to all, and the system of class compartments. The first won under Alexander I., the second under his successor Nicholas I. ; the field was disputed under Alexander II., with a considerable return to the ladder system ; Alexander III. again plunged into class reaction, and this continued officially under Nicholas II. ; but the whole of the excellent work of the *zemstva*, or county councils, and of the Duma was based on the ladder system ; the Soviet policy up till now was the class system turned upside down, and the recent reform is to be regarded as one of the first importance.

I visited a large secondary school, housed in spacious and well-equipped classrooms, in a new workers' settlement in the west of Moscow, serving, in the main, the families attached to a large adjacent factory ; eighty per cent. of the eight hundred boys and girls were workers' children. At the door I gratified an old

curiosity by asking a tiny child, who was standing there, what was his favourite subject, and he said at once "Natural history," the answer which I have come to expect always from Russian children. The duties of headmaster were divided between a youngish Party man in uniform, who was evidently responsible for the ideological direction of the teaching, and a typical old educationalist responsible for the teaching itself. Both agreed to my request not only to see over the building, but to attend classes in it. There was a "methodological cabinet," which I took to be the nerve centre of the ideological side of the work, and certainly a distinct method ran in detail through the conduct of the classes. One of the most striking features of the school was the completeness of the equipment for practical illustration of the lessons ; this was of course specially developed in the workshops, where the pupil is trained by a graduated system to handle increasingly complicated pieces of machinery.

After hearing a class, I asked to come next day and hear four more, and I was allowed to choose my subjects, which were literature, history, Russian language, and natural science. The school ages ran from seven to eighteen, and the classes which I attended averaged thirteen to fifteen.

The lady who taught literature to a class of about thirty-five pupils was dealing with Gogol's work, *Starosvetskie pomeshchiki*, a story of old-fashioned squires. All the pupils were provided with the text. She did not bother about tracing the course of the story, which, I am sure, was right, but dealt with its background ; in literary criticism I have always maintained that Russians

were far ahead of us, and that a Russian child had a natural instinct and interest which made formal or stupid observations impossible. The lady wrote on the board what she took to be the chief characteristics of the old family of gentry: "kindliness, hospitality, behaviour to others, absence of management"; a choice which was as fair and objective as could be. These points were gone over again with the class, and one pupil was singled out to give an explanation of a given point. The pupil selected, whether boy or girl, stepped up boldly to the blackboard and handled the question without any diffidence. Meanwhile a forest of hands was extended at any point where the demonstrator went astray, and the teacher rapidly took corrections from this side or that. This spirit of competition or, as it is called in Russia, emulation, was the most striking feature of the lesson. Finally a home task was written up on the board.

The history lesson was especially interesting to me, for it illustrated the new direction of which I have spoken above. Here were workers' children of fourteen or fifteen listening to an excellent account of the Roman Empire, beginning with Augustus. Again, with a complete absence of the formal, the organization, the roads, the laws, the social history were followed clean through. At one point the teacher read out a passage from Juvenal, and Seneca and Martial were also mentioned as illustrating the decline of the Empire. Poor Seneca had rather a short turn, as the main thing said about him was that he "wrote one thing and did another," which was duly repeated later on demand by a pupil. The teacher very rightly dealt more fully with the main social causes

of the decline and fall of the empire—the huge estates, the increase of slavery. Time was now nearly up, and she added, “So that was the end of the Roman Empire, and after that came the feudal system, and after that came the capitalist system, and after that came the socialist system in which every one has a fair chance. And who was it,” she went on, raising her voice, “that broke the yoke of religion? Charles Darwin, the Englishman.” This, I suppose, because there was an Englishman present, but I fancy that Darwin himself might have felt abashed. So that was the end of the lesson beginning with Augustus. I went up and thanked my colleague for her interesting and at times very eloquent lesson, and she half apologized that it was the end of term, and that there was the anti-religious idea to be brought in. Nothing could have been more objective than the rest of the lesson.

I must describe the atmosphere of the school as brimming with health. We know that at one stage after the October Revolution children received every encouragement to indiscipline. Now, in my opinion, it was exactly right. There was the greatest keenness in the class, but perfect order—and I can say that with the more assurance as I heard one teacher take a new class almost for the first time—but the moment the lesson was over, there was a healthy buzz of voices and the corridors were full of it. In one of the intervals I had a meal in the refectory, where posters of all kinds inculcated the elements of good behaviour. The children sat together in little groups by themselves, and seemed to be admitted, one age at a time; the food was good and sufficient.

## MUSEUMS, THEATRES, AND LITERATURE

Extra-mural education, largely by illustration, is particularly well developed in Moscow, and the use which is made of the many well-arranged museums could with great advantage be imitated here. This is entirely in the genius of the people. Long before the Revolution I used to notice that the poor, as such—not in driblets as it might be here—made the national museums their own, and that their enjoyment was much more sincere ; so that the policy of the new régime had already something considerable to build on. Now the museums are constantly used for excursions, under fixed regulations, which enable any visiting party that has announced its desire to obtain a special conductor. These conductors are really very competent lecturers, with a perfectly simple and natural style, full not only of knowledge, but often of verve and humour. Every Russian seems to have the gift of speech, that is, of clear, simple, and attractive narrative ; whatever else it may have lacked, the speaking in the Duma was of a considerably higher level than it is with us. The peasant speakers are generally the best of all, as they are not overburdened with any pettifogging of conscience in their expositions ; they pronounce the whole of their words, as we do not, and I remember the charm with which I have listened to a peasant fairy tale.

I watched the various groups visiting the famous Tretyakov gallery, which is more or less just as it was,

with a number of very interesting extensions. One lecturer I saw with a somewhat puzzled expression, which was repeated on the faces of his listeners, standing in front of a famous picture of Our Lord meeting John the Baptist in the wilderness. Evidently he had difficulty in explaining away the obvious fact that Jesus Christ was one of the greatest of proletarians. Another, with excellent spirit and variety, was explaining a picture of a military triumph of Skobolev. When he pointed out that the picture illustrated the instinct of patriotism, he was challenged by an equally clever young man in his group of listeners, and a short, friendly argument followed, in which the lecturer persisted in remaining objective. The Gallery gives the same emphasis as before to the portraits of Russian sovereigns, and there are still the great religious pictures of Kramskoy (including the wonderful "Christ in the Wilderness," almost an allegory of the present position of religion), and of Ge, a foster son of Tolstoy's, with his allegorical picture, "What is Truth?" in which Pilate is clearly the typical Russian governor and Jesus Christ clearly the typical Russian peasant. Repin occupies the same place, for instance, with his jolly group of Cossacks writing a cheeky letter to the Sultan in reply to a demand for allegiance, and also Vereshchagin, with his almost journalistic pictures of the horrors of war (he was painting his last picture on the *Petropavlovsk* in the Japanese war at the moment when it was torpedoed, and he went down with it).

But there are also new extensions, which I thought quite worthy of the rest. They include an admirable series of busts of Lenin by Andreyev; it is a face of such



variety that it lends itself to many different presentations, of which the sculptor has taken full advantage—Lenin reading, Lenin smiling, Lenin speaking, Lenin dozing. This suggested to me the change which has taken place—from the intellectual to the commonplace and practical ; for I cannot imagine a series of such variety of the almost stodgy features of Stalin. Among the pictures of the Civil War there was one dedicated to Messrs. the Inter-veners, in which I saw an excellent portrait of my dear old friend Sir Alfred Knox ; he remained much the handsomest in the group.

Equally interesting is the Museum of the Revolution, which is very well set up in all respects. It follows the history of popular movements, from Stenka Razin of the seventeenth century and Pugachev of the eighteenth century, and there are a number of actual contemporary memorials, which I had never seen before : a portrait of Pugachev painted over one of Catherine, the cage in which he was brought to Moscow. I thought this museum so good that I went carefully through it twice, the first time with a guide. It was a two hours' job for him, and he kept his form well throughout ; but he certainly followed the fashions of the day in calling all possible attention to anything connected with Stalin and completely excluding any but a perfunctory mention of Trotsky, who apparently had nothing at all to do with the creation of the Red Army, and was only responsible for a " whole number of serious mistakes " in the attack on Warsaw. Among the portraits of the præsidium of the First Soviet of 1905, of which Trotsky was vice-president, one could see the mark where his own had been removed. Almost all that he had was

a caricature of him being literally kicked out of the country from behind ; such is revolutionary justice. Stalin, on the other hand, was everywhere : the house where he was born, the stool and work-table of his father, the record of all his adventures, and an emphasis on every detail in which he might claim to have decided the fortunes of the Civil War.

There was a tremendous over-emphasis of the polemics inside the Social Democratic Party before 1905, when its leaders lived abroad and could count on but few active adherents in Russia, and a relative disregard of the liberal movement which at that time swept the country. This, however, was much more pronounced in the conductor's lecture than in the actual make-up of the museum, and I found on the walls many interesting memorials of this period.

The story was carried on through the War, where one saw some pictures which one would hardly have expected to find here, but only very little relating to Rasputin, and brought right down to the present time, including the successes of the Five Year Plan.

The Museum of Oriental Culture, which was in the charge of a celebrated orientalist scholar, was not what one might have expected from the name. There was again much too much Stalin, as the link between Europe and Asia, a position for which his Georgian nationality might qualify him. In one picture he was holding on to the world and breaking the fetters round it, but as there was nothing else for him to stand on, his legs dangled out into space, and it was difficult to see where he got his purchase. There were interesting, naïve products of civilization among Asiatic peoples, so far

inarticulate, and some quite wonderful examples of Chinese art.

The theatres, too, are definitely a part both of the educational and of the social services of the State. Perhaps the most striking feature was the audiences, and one could only rejoice at the simplicity and universality of their composition. It was not wholly a surprise to any one who in pre-War days had attended performances in the people's palaces, where any of the best artistes in Russia were glad to lend their services. The Russians were always an artistic people, and now they take full advantage of the vastly increased access, and the Government must be wholly commended for giving it to them.

A delicate kindness was offered to me by those responsible for my entertainment in arranging that the first play that I should see, Griboyedov's *Gore ot Uma*, was one which I have myself translated into English verse. I sat next to some peasant girls, who appeared to be in the theatre for the first time, were enjoying themselves immensely, and sometimes exchanged with me their simple and friendly comments on the characters. This is an entirely new presentation of Meyerhold, and I think he has gone much too far with his novelties. The great culminating speech of Chatsky at the end of Act III.—Chatsky is the nearest equivalent to a Russian Hamlet—was omitted altogether, though it is the crisis of the whole play, also, the last words of the pompous old stick-in-the-mud official, Famusov, which have seemed to me and others the only possible end. There was an extraordinary apparatus of staircases, and the actors, especially Chatsky, were always running up and down them with a creaking sound, which did not help their utterances.

At one point there is introduced an entirely imaginary by-play, with Sophie, the heroine, continually firing off a toy gun; and most of Chatsky's remarks to her on his first arrival he addressed while strumming at a piano, with his listener off the stage. As a result, the comedy, which is not a long one, extended almost into the early hours of the morning. One of Meyerhold's innovations, which no doubt pleased him as much as it did the audience, was an admirable guying of all the characters out of that lost world in the ball in the third act.

Three times during my visit I saw a Tsar of Russia presented on the stage, and in each case very kindly handled. In *Pskovityanka*, with its glorious music of Rimsky-Korsakov and its gorgeous stage scenery of church architecture representing the old city of Pskov, the hero is really Ivan the Terrible, and the heroine is his natural child. The whole theme could have been treated in a totally different way. No complaint could have been made if this particular historical character had been made odious to the audience; but it was quite the other way, and he was really throughout the centre of interest and sympathy. Very magnificent and up to the best standard of old times was the prolonged pageant which preceded his entry on horseback on to the stage.

Count Alexis Tolstoy the elder's play, *Tsar Fedor*, was given when I first visited Russia in 1898, and I think it was removed from the stage because too evidently this last of the dynasty possessed too many points of similarity with the then reigning Tsar Nicholas II. I saw it again this time in Moscow, and here too the handling was entirely sympathetic. Tsar Fedor is a most amiable character, who wants to make every one feel happy and

comfortable. At times he has flashes of spiritual insight and of peasant wisdom, but he is far too good-tempered and far too weak, though his complete inconsistency sometimes comes out very pleasantly, and at the end he throws himself on the ground with the words: "O God, why did you ever make me Tsar?"

The third occasion was perhaps the most striking. *The Queen of Spades* of Chaikovsky, one of my favourite operas, is the only one that I know of based on the theme of gambling. This was given in that very Zimin theatre in which I had made my appeal just before I last left Moscow, wondering whether I should see it again, and if so, under what circumstances, and my feelings were of a mixed description. Here Meyerhold was at his best with his alterations. He was present, and I had a short talk with him in one of the intervals. There is a mysterious old countess, in her youth a great beauty, who has been given a diabolic secret, by which she can guess three successive cards drawn at random from a pack. She may tell this secret to others twice, but if she is asked a third time she will die. She comes back from a ball and sits in her armchair lamenting the decline of gaiety since the times of Louis Philippe, when the hero of the play, Herman, a poor young guardsman, who must find a fortune if he is to marry the lady of his heart, comes out from a hiding-place and puts the fatal question with the fatal result. Meyerhold has now introduced the ball itself, which had no place in the original. It was a splendid pageant of old Tsarist days, and ended with the actual entry of Nicholas I., who was the very peak point in the history of the Russian autocracy—there was no question who it was, the actor was very well made

up, and very like him. As he came on there was a storm of applause, the curtain fell at once, and Meyerhold was dragged on to the stage, and received a tremendous ovation, which, by the way, did not come from all parts of the house. Russian artists are charming babies. Meyerhold kept pointing to his various collaborators to show that the praise was due to them, and there was a ridiculous scene in which each of them was apparently saying : "Don't clap me, clap him," and vigorously setting the example. Now, I did not in the slightest take this as meaning that the audience wanted the Tsars back. My sense of the public was the opposite : that they were very grateful for being allowed to see this representation of their historical past, and that the Government felt strong enough not to bother its head in the matter.

It was Moscow that first brought to my notice the centenary of the publication of *Pickwick*. The *Pickwick* story was presented most charmingly—with a charm that was certainly early Victorian and certainly bourgeois, but with an added bit of that special geniality and humour which is peculiar to Russia, though it blended admirably with the original conception. It was almost one of the best demonstrations I have seen of how much natural kinship there is between the two peoples.

It will rightly be gathered that the plays most frequently presented were those of the old repertoire, but I saw also a brilliant piece of music of the young genius Shostakovich, which, following in the succession of great Russian work in the ballet, is founded on the life of a collective farm. It was very original, very clever, very happy, and very amusing, especially the antics of a bourgeois visitor from a neighbouring suburb, and of an

intruding wolf, which insists on trying to make friends with him, and ultimately rides off on his bicycle.

I was specially interested in a visit to the Children's Theatre, the audience consisting entirely of children of about thirteen and fourteen. This was a play on the life and work of Til Eulenspiegel, a Flemish episode in the history of the Reformation. The hero was the champion of religious liberty, and the villains of the play were the Spanish Governor and the Catholic priests. The children were delighted with it, and loved the hero, and they cheered with joy when he was able to make his escape by ship to England. Here, as in the schools, there was perfect discipline during the actual performance, but the moment the curtain went down the theatre was full of a burst of happy and excited chatter.

Another accessory to the education of this clever, but backward people, is publication. Even when the Lives of the Saints, printed and circulated by the monasteries, were almost the only reading for peasants who could read, they were simple, direct, and real. I always found in the Russian masses literally a craving for education: "In Russia it is darkness—night," so a great Cossack was saying thoughtfully to me in the gathering mists as we rode back together from the front line in the War. The work done by Goslitizdat (the State Literary Publishing Agency) to meet the reading needs of the public is full of ideas, and the volume of its work is enormous. It was explained to me by its director, the Professor of Literature, I. K. Luppel. Vast quantities of paper are allotted to it by the Plan. Goslitizdat publishes in very large quantities classics both Russian and foreign. It has just issued Tolstoy's Diary, only now available,

preserving the old spelling. It gives special attention to translation, which in Russia has had the status of a fine art, to be treated as such, not in the hack way of verbal reproduction which has often in the past been thought sufficient in England. A special section of the drama deals in separate volumes with dramatic art, rhythm, movement, etc. Another section is especially designed for adult students. Another, not so well done, is for railway reading. "It is little enough," said Professor Luppel, when enumerating the vast quantities published. Much more will be done when, some four years hence, the great projected Institute of World Literature is completed on the banks of the Moscow River, which means the clearing out of a whole quarter and finding accommodation elsewhere for those who have to move. The section on literary criticism is very broadly conceived. Separate attention is given to proletarian writers of all countries; these are rightly kept distinct from revolutionary writers of the intelligentsia, who are also separately treated.

## THE COMMUNIST LEAGUE OF YOUTH

Enormous importance in all the work of the Communist Revolution in Russia has belonged throughout to the young and even to the quite young. In 1917, when everything crashed—the Tsardom through Nicholas II., the Church through the dominance of Rasputin—it was the young who set forth with bound-



less energy to create a new world, and Lenin was their prophet. They did a vast part of the spade work of the Civil War. When that was over and Communism retreated into the compromise of the NEP, several of them even committed suicide in their disillusionment and disappointment, and many of the others sank back into a bourgeois mood of success and satisfaction. Their enthusiasm was recaptured by Stalin with the all-important part which he assigned to them in the privations, dangers, and conflicts of the Five Year Plan. It was they who at Stalin's word, and with a ruthlessness of which they were themselves very conscious, hurried the peasant Russia into collective farms at such a pace and with such artificial results that Stalin himself had to call them off in his celebrated article, "Giddiness from Success." The Komsomol (or Communist League of Youth) is the corporate expression of this energy. Chastened and spurred by constant purges, it is at bottom a profoundly educational institution with a special purpose.

I had asked to have a talk with one of its leaders, and this was arranged for me with a member of the central committee, a young man of thirty-one. At the age of fourteen he found himself at the front in the Civil War, and by sixteen had reached the rank of major. I naturally discussed with him the recent restoration of the old pre-War ranks in the army; with the exception of that of general, the others are now as they were before—lieutenant, captain, major, colonel; then come C.O. of brigade, C.O. of division, army C.O. of different grades, and, at the top, marshal. The army, he told me, now consists sixty per cent. of peasants, and forty per cent.

of workers. Thirty-three per cent. are members of the Communist Party or the Komsomol, with a predominance among the officers. He described the work of the Komsomol as throughout one of education—education by example. First there was the Civil War to be won, later came the work of the First Five Year Plan, which, as we already know, called for all sorts of privations, self-sacrifices, adventure, and enterprise, and therefore served as a great stimulus for the revival of enthusiasm. In the Donets Basin, for instance, where the original housing and food supply was entirely inadequate, all sorts of things had to be improvised in haste. He reckoned two periods as those of the greatest stress: the Civil War, 1918–21, and, though “of course, incomparably less,” that of the period when collectivization was being enforced on the peasants. The hierarchy, as is known, begins with the Octobrist children, passes on to the Pioneers (eight to sixteen), for which all children are accepted, then to the Komsomol (fourteen to twenty-three), where selection is much more careful, and later to the Communist Party, where guarantors of reliability are required, with a much longer period of probation for those who are not of proletarian origin. As the ages overlap at each stage, the heads of the Pioneers are already members of the Komsomol, and the heads of the Komsomol are already full members of the Party, with a limitation of salary to 450 roubles a month.

He spoke to me all through with a respect for a different opinion: “from our point of view.” When I asked of the objects of their educational work, he said, “We teach them that religion is a myth,” and made no comment when I intervened: “If God had meant the same thing

as slavery we might have agreed with you." Drunkenness was a special object of attack, because it degraded character. Another was bad conduct towards girls, which he defined more closely as "casual connections." I was already aware of this aspect of their work. Another was hooliganism; I already knew of the recent vigorous legislation against it, and Bolshevo had long been a striking illustration of this side of the work. I asked him how they did all this. "We warn a member," he said, "and warn him again, and if he goes on we expel him."

The young Communists, he explained, had accumulated a very great experience from the leading part which they had to take in administration: especially, for instance, in the work of native republics. The Uzbeks, for example, had at first no party workers of their own, but now possessed quite a nucleus. Young Communists find themselves in highly responsible positions at very early ages; he gave instances of such at various ages between thirty-one and thirty-five, also of the comparative youthfulness of some of the leaders of the Communist Party. He especially emphasized the principle which I had so often heard expressed elsewhere, that initiative should start from the bottom, and that only later should direction and co-ordination come down from above. The task, as he summed it up, was to educate the whole population "from our point of view." I asked him how many he regarded as still outside the pale, and he gave the figure of two per cent., which, of course, in a population of 170,000,000 means more than 3,000,000, something like the figure which has been given for the inmates of the concentration camps. He believed that in some two years all would have been brought in. He

looked me straight in the face throughout, with that look of purpose which I saw so often in Moscow, and all that he said was clear, assured, and direct.

## LAW COURTS

I paid the usual tourist's visit to ZAGS, or Zig-zags as I should prefer to call it, the place where you get married in five minutes in one room and get divorced in five minutes in the next. For decorations there were the painted nails of the old lady in charge, and some white artificial flowers, which apparently were limited to the marriage department. I asked very carefully as to the truth of the report that latterly steps had been taken to delay the rapidity of divorce, but I was definitely told that this was not so. Whether or not the lady thought I might be discouraged with a different answer, I think that as a matter of fact she was wrong, for if I am not mistaken, the recent legislation provides that there shall at least be delay until the other partner of the marriage has been informed. One marriage was performed during my visit, and only took a few minutes. It was a very simple affair : a first marriage of a young, amiable looking workman of twenty-six, with a white button-hole, to an equally pleasant looking young woman of eighteen. The particulars of their work and employment were taken down rapidly. Otherwise the only question of detail asked was whether the bride wished to assume her husband's name or retain her own :

she preferred the former. Then the whole thing was over, and the certificate was handed to them. The old lady explained to me that sometimes a newly married couple return in a few days to be unmarried, and that sometimes, after a talk, they agree to stay as they are. More detailed was the information with regard to the charge of children of divorced couples; for instance, with a third marriage, a difficult situation arises in the question of alimony for the children of the previous two; both are treated on the same level. A number of divorces proves very costly. If the custody is given to the mother arrangements are made for the father to see something of his children, and sometimes the father's affection for them outweighs all other considerations in the question of divorce.

I also spent the best part of a day in a law court, with the advantage of a long preliminary conversation with a judge of first instance. It was intensely interesting. There are a number of people's courts in Moscow. The judge is appointed for fourteen and a half years, and his assessors year by year. Care is taken to train the assessors, who are attached to law schools. The accused can always obtain a defender at his choice, even without paying. In case of appeal against a sentence the matter might be sent back to a lower court differently constituted.

This particular judge was originally an employee of Filippov, the great Moscow confectioner. He explained, rather demonstratively, that the main purpose of the courts was "correction, not vengeance as in capitalist countries." The vast majority, he said, do get corrected. I therefore felt justified in asking him whether the concentration camps were being liquidated; from one of

my British informants who had worked far afield in the country I had gathered that this was his impression. "Well, no," said the judge, "these working camps contain other than prisoners." I was hardly satisfied with this answer. He said that there the inmates had their own self-government, and that the inspectors of character and discipline were able to say when they should be liberated. I did, however, verify from other sides that a good number of the prisoners had been liberated; and, indeed, there was a decree to this effect, with an amnesty for those who now showed themselves to be ready to work for the Government. I was even, from the same independent source, told of notable prisoners who had been restored to important posts, and of one with whom the Government had persisted in spite of what looked like wilful negligence.

The case which I saw tried was one of ordinary criminal justice. Englishmen are generally quite ignorant of the fact that for such cases the death penalty was abolished as far back as the middle of the eighteenth century. Since then there has been no capital punishment for ordinary murder. It is precisely the retention of the death penalty, not only for martial law but for political offences, that has burnt a great sore in the Russian public consciousness and can explain how, the moment the Tsar was down, capital punishment was abolished not only for political cases but also in the army. There is nothing in the methods of the Communist Government that the Russian sense is less likely to forgive than its restoration, precisely for political opposition, on a far wider scale than ever before. It has even infringed on ordinary conduct, because many have

been shot, whether for imputed maladministration of factories, railways, farms, etc., under the Plan, or as "grain thieves," who secreted and retained a part of the crops which they themselves had helped to grow. On this side of things my visit, of course, threw no light.

The case which I saw came fairly near the political category under the head of speculation ; but the matter in question, after I had listened for hours to the case, seemed to me to be a common swindle of a certain gang. The highest sentence of imprisonment under Soviet law is ten years ; the only thing beyond that is what is called "the maximum of social protection"—namely, the death sentence by shooting, which in practice is generally reserved for prisoners charged with political offences. The atmosphere of this trial was typically Russian—nonchalant and even homely. During the long interval, after it had appeared that conviction was inevitable, wives of the prisoners passed up food supplies to the police to be handed on to the accused, some of which were then and there consumed in court. The young judge had two assessors, a man and a woman, both of whom followed the case with intelligence. He himself showed distinct ability. The chief difference in procedure was that each witness was first examined by the judge, after which the prosecutor and the defending counsel, who were evidently professionals, had their turns, and the witness was not dismissed until the judge had ascertained that neither counsel nor his assessors had any further questions to ask. The defence were given their chance, and took full advantage of it. The case was one of a fraud involving vast quantities of pepper and paper, and they tried to plead either that these quantities might

have been left out of account or that they might have been accounted for in a kind of duplicate register ; but as the books were produced and the accountant carefully examined, there seemed to be nothing in this defence. The accused seemed quite reconciled to conviction ; in fact most of them had already pleaded guilty. The prosecutor's address seemed to me very fair. It was a careful analysis of the different degrees of guilt of the various prisoners, for whom he asked different sentences, of which the maximum seemed to be eight years.

## THE PEASANTS

As I have said, I cannot speak for conditions outside Moscow. I did visit one kolhoz about seven miles out, but it was really at the gates of the city, and is to be swallowed up by the new plan for the greater Moscow. The inhabitants were classed as peasants, but most of the men were now actually working in Moscow. Certainly their children were altogether better dressed than were ordinary peasant children in the past. Another novelty for me was the kolhoz stables with a number of grooms attached, where clearly the horses were better housed than they could have been by an individual peasant. Pigs were treated in the same way. By the recent modifications of the rules, peasants are now free to keep poultry and pigs of their own. Eighty per cent. already have cows. There was a good out-patients department in touch with a large neighbouring hospital. It was inter-



esting that here, as in so many other cases, no effective progress was claimed till after 1933. There was an old peasant lady present, really one of the old time, who was evidently now taking an active part in the work of this kolhoz, and sat at tea with us when we were entertained by the head of the farm and his chief colleagues. She described the dark days of the old time, when the best that a peasant could hope for in the way of an entertainment was a magic lantern operated by the deacon and showing scriptural pictures, and when machinery was almost entirely absent. Now she had even seen some of the most notable films in Moscow more than once. She was a hearty old lady and her pictures were very vivid. I was asking how far the peasants now threw themselves into the work of the farm, and when they had first begun to do so. "In 1933?" I suggested. With a vigorous gesture she replied: "In 1933 it was *smuta*"—a word which almost means civil war. It certainly seemed here that the plan of corporate work had been accepted, and that of Lenin's two favourite prescriptions, compulsion and persuasion, the second was at the present time the instrument in more general use. A talk with the chairman of the local Soviet and his colleagues showed that it was the practice to refer all questions of any importance for common deliberation. The school was a very great advance on old times. So were the co-operative stores. A club was now available through the recent confiscation of the village church. "We have at last been able," said the manager, a Party man, "to convince them that that is all a lie." However, the one house which he entered at chance, to show us an interior, was full of icons, for another old peasant lady who lived

there had absolutely refused to part with them. I exchanged with her the old greeting: "*S Bogom*" (God by ye).

The whole question of the future is the attitude of the peasants, and of this I could not possibly judge, or even guess, without an extended visit to one or more collective farms in the country. When Stalin had the ruthlessness and also the courage to drive through his policy of collectivization, he judged with perfect truth in declaring that in Russia a collectivized industry in the midst of an individualist agriculture meant the failure of Communism. The steps by which the new policy was enforced will long remain in the memory of all who know about them and do not try to ignore them. Of the many victims of the Revolution and Civil War, some of them the very flower of Russia, I have always thought as of the individuals who went down in the Great War, who were also too often the very best. But to me the peasantry is, what of course it is in fact, the mass of the population in Russia, and the one thing which has kept me awake at night in all this story has been the ruthless scenes of collectivization, when the best and most thrifty labour of Russia was uprooted, property was seized, and the victims were hurried off-hand into trucks to be carried to the concentration camps of the north or elsewhere. Maurice Hindus, undoubtedly a friend of the Communist experiment, with his great gift of illustrating mass talks of the peasantry, has given us cruel scenes out of that epoch, rightly not forgetting to show the perpetrators' own sense of the ruthlessness which they were committing. That particular struggle is now a thing of the past, though it has been renewed, as Stalin

himself has had to say, in quite a new form in opposition inside the collective farms. How far is that too dying down? From the summary of legislation which I have given near the beginning of this little book, it can definitely be concluded that since 1933 it has taken an altogether different direction, one of alleviation and conciliation. Apart from the liberation of many of those imprisoned, the peasants have now the restored right of their *usadba* or kitchen garden allotment, which they possessed under the Tsars even before the liberal land settlement of Stolypin, and, as has been mentioned, there is now no restriction on the number of their pigs and poultry. They have regained one of the things which they most care for, the right to possess cows of their own. More than that, the revised articles of association in the so-called artels give them a much extended part in the management of the farms. Arrears of collective debts to the State have also been cancelled. Further, there is a promise of something which may prove of wider importance, the new "constitution" (it has been definitely described to me under that name), establishing universal, equal, and secret suffrage. This means the restoration of the ballot and, it is to be presumed, the abolition of the practice of sending down from the Communist Party the names of those to be elected by a show of hands—in fact, the satisfaction of two of the principal demands of peasant representatives when consulted by the Government in 1935.

I asked many questions about the attitude of the peasantry. From some of the British sources which I have mentioned—Britishers who have had close contact with the peasants throughout this period—I gathered

that now their well-being is unquestionably greater, and that after three successive good harvests the peasant sees the enormous advantage to be acquired corporately for all out of the vast extension of machinery in agriculture, so that the days of conflict are sinking into the past. Without further and extensive evidence, I must leave the question at that.

## RELIGION

The Communists, soon after their accession to power, issued a decree forbidding the teaching of religion to persons under eighteen in groups of more than three or four. This was the first blow which it dealt to religion. It confiscated church property, but it also confiscated every other property. It abolished religious teaching in the schools, but that has been done in other countries. The years 1922-23 were marked by a frontal assault on religion, culminating in the Easter trials of 1923, when a number of Catholic priests, who refused to obey the law prohibiting religious teaching, were condemned to long terms of imprisonment, and Monsignor Budkiewicz was judicially murdered. Since the world-wide indignation excited by these trials, the attack on religion, directed with the greatest ability by Yaroslavsky, has been aimed not primarily against believers, though they have often had to suffer materially for their belief, but against the ministers of religion as such. Disobedience to the law prohibiting any general teaching of religion to persons under eighteen is still a State offence, and

leads naturally to the concentration camp, whither ministers of all confessions have been sent in large numbers for their witness to their mission. Ministers have had no right to quarters, nor, while the rationing system existed, to rations ; its abolition is probably for them a certain alleviation.

In order to understand the Communist approach to the question I went twice carefully through the Anti-religious Museum. It is at present housed in the ancient cloisters of the Monastery of the Passion, which I was told is due for destruction. It is very interesting. The left walls of the cloisters are devoted to a pictorial exposition of the grossest forms of superstition, and in particular to the association in history of enthroned religion with enthroned secular power. On the right hand side is an exposition of the teaching of science. The guide, who was very clear and lucid, took about two hours to show me through on my first visit ; on my second I was alone. On the left, in picture, was the account of the origin of the world in Genesis ; at the creation of the sun on the fourth day, that is, after the earth and seas, he added quickly : " First mistake." The origin of man is set forth by Adam and Eve on one side, and Darwin and his monkeys on the other. Treatment of the soul was a more thorny matter ; on the left were the crudest representations of material forms, which heathen tribes had identified with souls ; on this point science presented no more exhaustive contribution than diagrams showing the nervous system, which surely left the question just where it was. Everything was done to show by picture that early presentations of Christ were identical with those of leaders of other religions. The

Pope was shown to wear a crown like a king. So was Jesus Christ, though the only crown he ever wore was one of thorns. Everything was done to emphasize benediction by religion of systems resting on slavery. Icons or other religious pictures were shown to include portraits of the great or the wealthy. Finally the story was carried through the Revolution and Civil War right up to the present time, with statistics of some of the strange sects that have sprung up under the Terror—such as the Red Dragon and the Imyaslavtsy—and portraits of religious charlatans.

It would not be possible to form any reliable idea of the strength of religion in Russia by conversations with believers. This is, of course, practically barred to any one who does not know Russian; and, generally, Russians are now, from past experiences, very shy about talking to foreigners. Some famous visitors to Soviet Russia have been shown a church on what is probably an ordinary work day (for there is no Sunday now, and the coincidence of Sundays and rest days is now quite accidental), and seeing a few old people worshipping and no one else (for in present-day Moscow one must work to eat), they may have judged that the battle against religion had been completely successful, and that the church was so little used that it might well be closed. In the circumstances one is lucky if one gets any glimpses of active religion. I have mentioned the old lady in the collective farm. "Are there many believers," I was able to ask a chance acquaintance, a working man. "Yes, I am one of them," he said; "how can one live without faith? They, too, cry out, 'O Lord, O Lord,' when they are in trouble." "What about the children?"

"Oh, the children will often enough go with their parents; of course some don't."

But it happened that I was able to get one most impressive picture. I have mentioned that there were Christmas trees everywhere for New Year's Day, and I think it was probably hardly a coincidence that the Russian Christmas Day, the 7th of January, was apparently out of its order assigned as a rest day. I had told my guide that I should go to a church on Christmas Eve, so as to avoid any other arrangements. There were once 1,600 churches in Moscow; at the time of my visit the number of those still open was given as 40, and two of them, it appeared, were closed during my visit. Priests may not live in the city, and the only function which they can go in to perform is public worship. My inquiries for a church met with a good deal of difficulty, and I had to go a long way to the outskirts to attend a service.

It was a church about the size of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields. As I approached I saw in the twilight converging crowds in cloth caps, such as I have seen going to a League football match. The church was absolutely packed, and the crush resembled nothing more than that at a League match. I am used to such matches, and once or twice have almost been submerged by the crowd, and have seriously wondered whether I should get out alive. That was my experience of Christmas Eve in Moscow. Every one stands in a Russian church, and we were packed as close as sardines. It was with the very greatest difficulty that I managed to get into a spot where I could at least breathe freely in the south transept. The service lasted two hours. The singing was beautiful, and, I felt, more fervent than any that

I have before heard in Russia. I also noticed that three times the congregation itself was able to join in the singing, and did so with great devotion. All through the service there was a persistent and steady crush of worshippers who were making their way through towards the altar to kiss the cross before they left ; that was the sign of allegiance, and it was clear that they were not going to leave the church without having given it. I have mentioned that I saw everywhere in Moscow a look of purpose on practically all faces ; nowhere was this stronger than with the worshippers of that Christmas Eve. So far from a congregation of old and withered persons, both sexes and literally all ages were here equally represented, and it was a crowd in which it was impossible to think of the word class. There were strong, middle-aged men, sometimes holding the hand of a boy ; there were youths and young women ; there were all. The deacons going round for the offertory could only make their way through the mass at all by asking to be let through as one does when alighting from a crowded carriage on the London tube. As we came out, the priests were beginning to go through the whole service again, and there was a crowd equally large trying to make its way in. It was not a sight that I can ever forget.

## A TALK

The most useful thing in my visit came near the end. There was a young man holding a specially important post in the Government, who had been



described to me by English friends as particularly helpful. He struck me in our first conversation by the quickness and frankness with which he went straight to the point; he had that ease and cleverness which has always appealed to me in Russians, and faced every question straight as it came up. "Let's see," he said easily, "when were you last in Moscow? Oh, I remember your *Russian Memoirs*." So he made it clear that he knew all the worst about my "criminal past," including even the Zimin theatre, and nothing more had to be said on that subject.

He saw at once the position which an academic institution like our School must take up, admitting of totally different views, and commented: "You are very catholic," to which I replied: "I suppose universities ought to be like that." Later he invited me to dinner, and in a talk of three hours we ranged freely over every subject in question.

I have said that my attitude in general throughout my visit was, in a way, one of friendly challenge. "Can you get me a talk with Mr. Yaroslavsky, the leader of the Godless?" I asked. "Why do you want to see him?" "Because I happen to be a believer, and I want to know what it is all about." The talk, by the way, could not be arranged for want of time. I congratulated him cordially on the remarkable success of the Plan, and quoted the comment of a critic, which I have already mentioned: "They have won all along the line." "Those," he said, "were exactly the words of Molotov in his speech to-day."

I reported what had been achieved towards my educational objects in which he had already given me cordial

help, and he, like others, regarded them as both desirable and achievable. I was glad to find that he was as emphatic as I was, that visitors to Russia ought to learn Russian first. "We are not very satisfied with our foreign observers," he said, and explained that it was not that they were lacking in cordiality but in understanding. The question of propaganda was still the main obstacle to a due exchange of students and of materials, but on the "scientific" side it did not really come in.

We discussed the new electoral law which, he said, is in active preparation, and the recent removal of restrictions of origin in admission to the universities; both, I thought, would create a more favourable impression of the Soviet Government in England.

At one point we got on to the question of the Intervention. "In my view," I said, "the whole trouble was that the War included your Revolution. When the Government here stopped fighting, we not unnaturally helped those who continued, and didn't give them up as soon as the War was finished on our side, but now no one in his senses in England dreams of interfering with you; I hope all that has gone away into the past. We know it is not for us to settle the form of government in Russia; that lesson has been learnt." We passed to present dangers, and accepted as common ground that on both sides we want peace. This led to mention of Hitler's *Mein Kampf* and the threats which it contains of invasion of Russia. "They are still in the last edition," I said. "Yes," said he, "and they are still in his mind." Then came the Far East, where the Japanese have not waited to declare war, but started already to do all that they want there.

I wished to secure collaborators in Soviet Russia for our *Slavonic Review*, which, as I said, had to feel free to take contributions from all sides. "It is absurd," I said, "to remain cut off from the country which we are studying." This led to a discussion of the Russian emigration. I told him all about my last Easter visit to the Russian emigrants in Paris, the question that I had put to them and the replies, and how all the most important of them took the same view as the true mother in the judgment of Solomon. "Anyhow," I said, "that does make some kind of common interest between you and them." In discussing their position he said, "We gave them a time limit to come back, and those that did not, we had to regard as our enemies." "Of course it is your affair, not mine," I replied, "but if you would admit the view of an outsider, I look at it just the other way. Do you know that Guchkov is dying of cancer in Paris?" "Guchkov was some one," he said. "Well that generation of emigrants," I went on, meaning those who had taken a leading part in the Civil War, "is dying out of itself; there are not so many of them left. I am thinking of the young generation; a time limit is just what would not occur to me. I should say it is not one question at all, but a thousand, or as many as there are different emigrants. Some of them no doubt will be absorbed in the countries where they are living; there are sure to be others who would wish to come back and give a hand in the constructive work which is going on here." He then told me how he himself had wished to secure permission to return for one such, and he seemed to admit that each such question might be treated on its merits.

I asked him whether the bases of support of the Government in the population were broadening out—for that was my own impression of what I had seen in Moscow. “The hard years for the Government,” he said, “were 1932–33. Now we are getting the fruits of the privations which we had to face at that time.” More of the neutral and indifferent were now coming in to their support. “The foreign observers,” he remarked, “have lagged behind. They are still some years late in their estimates (and this was certainly my own impression). Some of them still hold to the idea of a backward Russia which depended in the main on foreign specialists, and had to send half-manufactured goods to be made up abroad.” He again emphasized what had so often before been said to me, that the Plan was everywhere meant to rest on a first initiative from below, and that assertion is certainly much more justified now than it was in the difficulties and conflicts of two years ago.

Twice at the end of our talk he said, “Definitely there is common ground.” “When I get back,” I said, “I shall write four articles: on your construction work—and I shall praise; on your social services—and I shall largely praise; on education; and my last article will be called ‘desiderata.’” He smiled.

## DESIDERATA

Definitely there are common interests. The Soviet State, in the intensive scheme of internal reconstruction in which it is enthralled at the present time, definitely

desires to avoid all foreign complications, and has to seek goodwill where it can find it. They and we alike seek before all things the maintenance of world peace, which of itself counts for very much. Even if we are in no way likely to follow France in building up a system of counter alliances, it is much for the USSR that we stand for collective security.

The threats to Russia from West and East have had their reaction on Russian internal affairs. Even in their defence of their revolutionary agricultural policy of collectivization of 1929 to 1933 Soviet spokesmen are quite prepared to admit that it practically amounted to civil war—the Government against the peasantry. At that time even the reliability of the Red Army was seriously in question. How, in such circumstances, could the peasantry, who are after all the backbone of the army, be counted on to show enthusiasm in the defence of their country? It is very significant that the first alleviations which have since been granted to the peasants were first applied in the frontier provinces of the Far East as early as December 11, 1933. Since then there has been a very definite trend towards conciliation. As the external pressure is not likely to decrease, we may expect these concessions also to continue.

The Government is evidently and naturally gratified by a great industrial success. Stalin is a very different man from Lenin; he seems to me both cruder and less theoretical. The enormous publicity given to his personality seems to me to be of a different kind from that which has been and is still lavished on Lenin. Even the return of personalities and facts, as such, into the programme of education has its own significance.

If this is the way that the Soviet Government is going, the inevitable distaste for brutality in a free country like our own may tend to lose much of its rawness. All with whom I spoke in Moscow emphasized "correction," as opposed to "punishment," as the aim of the Government. The famous "wreckers' trials," where it was necessary to find a scapegoat for any failure in the Plan, can pass into the background, for the Plan is in the main successful, and the encouragement given to the Stakhanov men, consistent or not with previous theories, is a very different picture.

The root question is, of course, the attitude of the peasants. If the peasants are indeed now really converted to the collectivized system, then my Young Communist's claim that the Government receives the support of the population, with the exception of some two or three millions, can be accepted, and there remains for criticism only the continuance of forced labour in the concentration camps. It is true that the most experienced of my English informants in Moscow, who had recently visited the sorest point of the collectivization campaign, the Kuban Cossacks, received this impression there; but we cannot forget that the bulk of the existing population had already been removed by force.

Another subject for very strong criticism had been the treatment meted out to men of learning. It is not forgotten that some of the most distinguished men of learning in Europe, in particular three great historians, Platonov, Lyubavsky, and Tarlé, were driven away into exile and extreme poverty, and that the two first at least are known to have died under this stress. No reasonable case has ever been made out for disloyalty on their part

to the Soviet Government ; their crime at that time was that they were not Marxists, and the whole Academy of Sciences, the most distinguished learned body in Russia, was remodelled in the same sense. At the present time the two academies—this one and the Communist Academy, are apparently being fused together under the title of the first, and this may perhaps mean that less emphasis is now placed on the Communist bias. In any case, as has been explained, the old way of teaching history has been restored on the instruction of Stalin himself, and the decrees already mentioned, abolishing restrictions based on class origin in admission to the university, is a very serious step in a direction which is sure to appeal to our sympathies here. It must be said, however, that even during my short stay I had a reminder that the old régime of constraint was still there.

And there is the third great question, that of the persecution of religion. I have put it to Russian Communists that Jesus Christ was clearly a proletarian. "Yes," they will say, "he was, in a way, a proletarian," and how is it to be denied? They will go on to urge that religion has been associated with power. I can well understand how Marx, living in England in the middle of the nineteenth century, may have seen that many country parsons were really, so to speak, in the pocket of their squires, and that this was possibly even worse in other countries. But is not this something which would have shocked any sincere believer much more than an unbeliever, and was it not both unhistorical and ridiculous to read this back into the early Christian Church, than which probably no more truly communist body ever existed? It is one thing for a person who

neither knows nor understands the meaning of religion to say he has not got any ; it is quite another to say that no one else shall have it, and in my view nothing could be more inept or ineffectual than to try to expel this root instinct from the human spirit by the use of force.

It will be seen from what I have written that I did discuss this matter with Russian Communists, and I am bound to say that I never felt that there was anything like that heart in their answers that I was sure to find when we were discussing the positive side of their programme, or their truly extraordinary work of construction. I felt as if they were becoming more and more practical, more and more realist, and that this and other purely theoretical articles of their programme were of themselves falling into the background, and I sometimes got from them even a half admission of this view.

All these three great questions—of the peasantry, of learning, and of religion—can be summed up in one, that of liberty, the respect for human personality. Certainly it is not by sheer invective that we should help any one with whom we sympathize in Russia ; for the idea that we can ourselves dictate the form of government there is at most nothing more than a legend. Never can I recommend any abstention from criticism, which would simply mean that we should cease to count in these matters. If I had gone to Moscow, not as an Englishman with responsibilities on this side but as an advocate of Communism, I might perhaps have ignored all that I did not wish to see and taken my place obediently as one of the Yes-men of Stalin. I can remember plenty



of instances in the past in which we friends of Russian freedom did not fail to point out there what were the conditions of respect and goodwill in this country, which, however different, however limited in its understanding, must follow the laws of its own free judgment. The Soviet Government is, I think, certainly much more representative of Russia as a whole than it was in the time of conflict two years ago ; seriously threatened on two sides, and like ourselves earnestly desiring the maintenance of peace, it is now much more prepared to recognize the existence of other views than its own, and more ready to take account of obstacles to goodwill.

And, to have any views at all worth having on the subject, the first need is study. It was a national need and not a minor one that took me out to Moscow to try to remove some of the present obstacles to study. It is a poor compliment to a great people to write a book of a thousand pages on it without having taken the trouble to learn its language. Before the Revolution even numbers of our official representatives there did not think this necessary. The Russians themselves, as will have been seen from my record, do not fail to make the proper inferences.

These, I think, are the conditions in which we can make England count for good in Russia. It is for us, the Russians, and the future to see what can be done by those who are sincerely working for better relations between the two countries in the best interests of both.

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